

MORE THINGS IN
HEAVEN AND EARTH

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ADVENTURES IN QUEST OF A SOUL

BY

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METHUEN & CO LTD
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

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PART I

I HAVE written this book, not as an exposition of spiritualism, nor even as a defence, for I am only a recruit, or rather a cadet in the camp, and it were presumption in me to pretend to the rank of an instructor.

But in my study of the subject, and before I had any personal experience of spiritualist phenomena I had been convinced by the testimony of distinguished explorers that the case for spiritualism deserved a scientific and judicial examination by careful and dispassionate inquirers whose sole object would be to discover the truth.

I saw, also, that if such an inquiry was to be successful it must be preceded by an attempt to dispel the cloud of obsolete or frivolous objections which obscures the public sight of the vital issues.

Under these circumstances, I have been drawn to consider the claims of the spiritualists and the nature of the objections by which those claims are generally met.

What I call the essential claims for spiritualism

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are two . Spiritualists claim that the human spirit survives the bodily decay we call death, and that surviving spirits can and do commune with the human spirits still inhabiting physical bodies on this earth

There is nothing in those claims to justify the annoyance, the indignation or the contempt with which they are so often met It is not immoral for a mother to believe that her dead child still lives and can get into touch with her Such a faith is certainly neither wicked nor absurd

The spiritualist position is too well established to be dismissed with a few words of sour censure or thoughtless jest Genuine and candid criticism is faced with the task of explaining spiritual phenomena by some reasonable theory other than that of genuine messages to the living from the dead

If the messages alleged to come from surviving spirits are not genuine, what are they ? That is the question sceptics have to answer Blank denial or shallow scorn cuts no ice Messages come how and whence come they ? Spiritualists say, "such and such things have happened and their happenings have been testified to by clouds of witnesses How do you account for them ?" Let us examine a few of the answers most commonly offered by anti-spiritualist critics

A friend sent me a report of a sermon on Spiritualism, preached by Canon Symes at Barrow on April 13, 1924

The sermon is a curious document, and is typical of the misunderstanding, or misrepresentation

which so often passes as criticism of new movements or new ideas Canon Symes has to account for the innumerable messages received by spiritualists, and he attempts to do it by a sweeping statement which rests upon no evidence of any kind Spiritualist messages, he says, are nearly always due to thought-reading, or telepathy

"It is necessary," the Canon says, "to mention telepathy because it is doubtless the basis of much spiritualistic deception" And he tells us how this happens

"The inquirer goes to a medium The medium falls into a state of trance and tells the inquirer things that are only known to him Of course, the medium has simply photographed, as it were, the brain of the inquirer, and is using the inquirer's own thoughts Scientific men are generally agreed that many of the phenomena of spiritualism can be explained by telepathy This reduces the number of cases for which there is no apparent explanation to a very small amount"

Quite simple, and no doubt convincing to those who know very little about the subject But actually absurd The Canon says "There are people who can read what is passing in our minds These people are frauds, and, of course, repeat the inquirer's own thoughts." These assertions are not true in substance or in fact There are no "people," there is no person who can read what is passing in our minds Thought-reading, as practised by conjurers, has never gone beyond the region of clever guessing No conjurer and no medium in the world can read the thoughts of any other woman or man

The Canon says that "Scientific men are gener-

ally agreed that many of the phenomena of spiritualism can be explained by telepathy" Which scientific men? I have never heard or read of any man of science who believes anything so apocryphal Telepathy or thought-reading is a mere excuse set up by the opponents of spiritualism to explain phenomena which cannot be explained in any other way Telepathy accounts for hardly anything

Let us have the truth about telepathy or thought-reading Telepathy is not a common phenomenon It is very rare, and its powers are very limited It has happened that in moments of intense emotion one mind has been able to send a kind of wireless message or picture to another mind at a great distance A son in New York might learn telepathically that his mother in London was ill or dead But there is no case on record of any medium being able to read the thoughts of a sitter I am willing to put this to the test at any time The explanation offered by Canon Symes is directly contrary to the facts

One thing I notice in the controversies raging around spiritualism is that the sceptics seem to have a monopoly of attack, the believers contenting themselves with defence That may be magnificent, but it is not war All good strategists teach that the most effectual form of defence is attack, and all good tacticians seek out the weak point in their antagonists' line, and hammer at that

Now the weak point in the sceptic's line is just that theory of thought-reading Their faith in that theory is as credulous as the most extravagant

beliefs of any spiritualist And the theory is a dud In a book by H A Dallas, called "Objections to Spiritualism Answered," Dr James H Hyslop is quoted on this point—telepathy

" It involves the possibility that the mind of the psychic can have access to all living consciousness and subconsciousness, that it can select the right person, and that it can select from his or her sub-conscious mind the right facts to impersonate a given deceased person but there is not one iota of evidence for any such selective process "

" Oh," says the sceptic when asked to explain an evidential spiritualist message, " that's obvious It is telepathy " That satisfies him He asks for nothing more He does not stop to ask himself why he believes in that versatile power of telepathy He does not ask himself how he knows that telepathy can accomplish the wonders with which he credits it

He says telepathy accounts for the phenomena, but he offers no proof of the claim He is adamant in his demands for proofs of survival, but he takes telepathy on trust And yet, if he set himself to find proofs of this marvellous telepathic power, he would very soon discover that there are no proofs The telepathic explanation of spiritual phenomena is a mere hypothesis and, as Dr Hyslop says, it is unsupported by a single atom of evidence

An inquirer, we are to believe, goes to a medium and the medium reads his thoughts and humbugs him Not at all The medium is unconscious and does not know what happens It is the control

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who speaks I went to a medium last autumn (1923) The medium was an English lady, the control was a Hindu girl Did the control read my thoughts? No She told me a great many things, but she did not tell me one thing of which I was thinking But she told me a number of things about which I was not thinking, and she told me several things which I did not know

Now, it is quite obvious that the most perfect thought-reader can only read the thoughts that are in his sitter's mind Telepathy, even the Canon would admit, cannot read in a sitter's mind facts of which the sitter is ignorant If a medium tells a man that his absent son has been drowned at sea it is evident that he has not got the fact from the mind of the father And mediums do repeatedly give their sitters news of which the sitters are ignorant

Let me speak from my own experience During a sitting of an hour and a half nearly all the messages given to me purported to come from my wife through the control Now, if the control had been reading my thoughts she would have spoken of matters in which I was interested, and in words such as I should have used But instead of that she spoke of things in which my wife was interested and in words and phrases such as my wife used All my old friends to whom my wife was known agree that the messages were characteristic of her, and the things she was reported to have said were "just like her" If the control was reading thoughts she was reading my wife's thoughts, and not mine.

At a second sitting with the same medium I asked the control, Feda, if my wife had met any of her intimate friends on the other plane Feda said, "Yes, one of them is with her now She passed over before your lady They were very happy to meet and be with each other again" She then began to describe this friend

This was a lady I will call Mrs John She was a cousin of my wife's and a life-long friend She had a son whom I will call Jonathan Feda gave a perfect description of Mrs John and I then said "I want you to ask that lady for a message for her son who is very anxious about her"

Feda answered "Yes But Jonathan is worried about something else besides his mother He is in a position from which he must be released as his surroundings prevent his development That is worrying him very much"

Was that thought-reading? I did not know that Jonathan was in a position from which he needed release And how could the medium have read in my mind what was not there? She had never heard of Jonathan, nor of Mrs John

But the sceptic has an answer double telepathy Jonathan, in London, sent by telepathy into my mind a message about his trouble and although I was not conscious of that message the cunning medium read it I make a present of that explanation to any reader who is easier of belief than I

My wife, who was a Yorkshire woman, pronounced the word, Bob, not as rhyming with nob, but rather as rhyming with garb. At a sitting of

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a circle in South Africa, a lady medium (not professional) took a message in automatic script. This was given as a message to me from my wife. It began "Tell Barb"—and the medium did not know who or what "Barb" was but sent the message to me as written.

Now, that medium had no idea how my wife pronounced my name. How does thought-reading explain that message? Whose thought was the medium reading? Mine, away in England, seven thousand miles off? Or did I, not knowing a séance was being held, send a telepathic thought to the medium in Johannesburg? Or did my wife spell my name in that way as a proof that the message came from her? I leave the choice of explanations to the reader.

At my first sitting, at Barnet, on September 23, 1923, my wife's chief object was to convince me that it was she who was speaking. To that end she told me many things about the house and the garden and ourselves, and some of her strokes were clever.

For instance, the control was speaking of a girl, suddenly she said, in a puzzled way "Alas! alas! Is that a joke? She is smiling—oh! she says where she comes from a girl is a lass and a boy is a lad."

The control got the words "a lass" from someone. From whom? She mistook them for the word "alas" and was corrected. Who corrected her? My wife was a Yorkshire woman, and used the words, "a lass, a lass," as a sign to me. Who will believe that the unconscious

medium in the chair could have concocted such a characteristic incident? The natural and only explanation is that someone was talking to the control and using Yorkshire phrases. The Canon's thought-reading explanation does not touch these facts, they are too intricate and subtle for such an explanation. I return to the sermon. Canon Symes said.

"After reading through hundreds of pages of utterances by these people, I can honestly say that I have never come across anything that was of the slightest use to anybody. Much of it is ridiculous, frivolous, absurd—so absurd that if a living being were to fall like that he would be judged fit for a lunatic asylum. No one would pay the slightest attention to many of these books if they had not been written by well-known men. So much for the work of the medium."

Nothing of the slightest use, talk fit for a lunatic asylum? I did not find it so. All the messages I got were practical and sensible, and well calculated to convince me that my wife was speaking, and towards the end of the sitting, when I asked for advice on a very critical difficulty, I got a calm and reasoned answer characterized by the simple wisdom and quiet good sense upon which I had so often relied when my wife was my chief counsellor.

As for what the Canon says about spiritualist books, I can only say that my own reading does not confirm his opinion. But this is another matter in which the spiritualists are not treated with candour.

If a medium says my Uncle William wants his niece Janet to have his gold repeater, the critic

sniffs and talks about trivialities Though he does not explain how the medium knew I had an Uncle William or how he knew my uncle left a gold repeater On the other hand, if the medium tells me that the place my mother has gone to is more beautiful than Devonshire or Honolulu, and that there are two pink moons and a river of gold, the same critic shrugs his shoulders and sneers about fairy tales

If a medium tells me that my wife laughs at my old hat I shall be more impressed than by the most eloquent description of the silver-blossomed bong trees in the Pleiades

The Spiritualists get good philosophy and sound reason from their mediums Personally, I prefer evidential messages, and that for a reason which I will now make clear

Canon Symes says "Spiritualism only treats of the life after death The great failure of spiritualism is that it has nothing to tell us, except that persons who have passed over can possibly get into touch with us"

Only that! Spiritualism can only tell us that our beloved who have left us are alive and that we shall meet them again It can only tell us that love is stronger than death It can only tell us that "persons who have passed over can possibly get into touch with us" "Persons who have passed over" You may hear words of love and words of hope from the wife or child or friend you loved so dearly and whom you have so bitterly mourned That, the Canon seems to think, is such a trivial matter as to be hardly worth bother-

ing about But one who has loved a sweet woman for fifty years, and lost her, one whose brilliant son was killed on the Somme, one whose loyal, affectionate, and helpful daughter was cut down like a flower, will not look upon the assurance of survival and the hope of reunion with the cool detachment which Canon Symes affects, or feels

But spiritualism does not "only" assure us there is no death, it does not "only" enable us to converse with those who have left us for a while it gives us definite and plain information as to that other life Perhaps Canon Symes would not accept such messages as true, but he could not dismiss them as trivial or insane For instance, my wife told me in her own simple, practical way, "death does not make so much difference as you suppose It is only like going into another room "

A simple statement, simply made But consider its tremendous significance Death, the dreaded death, is "only like going into another room" Canon Symes will not believe that, but he cannot put it down as not worth knowing—its implications are terrific That is one thing which nearly all the messages tell us—that the other world is much like this Another thing they tell us is that our individuality survives After death we are still ourselves No better, no worse We do not, they say, immediately after death change into angels or devils, but remain our imperfect human selves with the task of upward development still upon us That is not an orthodox belief, but it seems to me a very reasonable and comforting

philosophy Sir Oliver Lodge, in his new book, "Making of Man" (Hodder and Stoughton, 3s 6d net), says

"We learn now that those who have departed this life and left behind their bodies of matter, still retain (or at least possess) what they speak of as 'bodies' with their memory, character and personality uninjured and conserved. We have learnt this by entering into communication with them, by speech and writing just as we did when they were here. They are not really out of touch with us, nor do they seem to be far removed."

Recently I read in a Sunday paper some sarcastic comments on spirit messages. The writer said something to the effect that if the spirits of the dead had nothing better to do than haunt the earth and rap out trivialities, he meant to live as long as he could. When I mentioned this intelligent criticism to Sir Oliver Lodge, he gave me a very apposite and sensible answer. He said one might as well contend that a son living in New Zealand would be wasting his time if he wrote a gossipy letter home.

That seems to me a suggestive idea. What do we put into letters to absent friends and what do they put in their replies? Just the kind of trivialities which we get in the best evidential messages from the other plane. Baby has cut another tooth. Aunt Eliza has been down with the 'flu. The farmers want rain. Jim is in the pink and getting fat. Rusfile's new novel, "The Purple Pride," is very interesting. Louisa often speaks of the lovely time she had on her recent visit to the old country. Sheer trivialities, but just the kind of news we want. To a stranger

such letters would be of no interest at all To us who know Louisa and Aunt Eliza and Jim and by whom "The Purple Pride" was recommended, every item is important

But there is another value besides the personal value in the alleged trivialities of spiritualist messages. they are evidential If a medium who has never been near my house describes to me the position of the furniture and the failure of an operation in the garden, and if another medium, who has never seen any member of my family, describes to my daughter an uncle of mine who died when she was a year old, and describes him so accurately that we immediately recognize him, those trivialities are more convincing than the most beautiful word picture of the Delectable Mountains, or the most eloquent sermon on the ethical basis of the inhabitants of Mars.

And, again, the importance or triviality of a message from the other plane cannot be judged by a stranger for whom it has no personal meaning. If a man's dead wife tells him she is alive and well and often walks with him in the garden, that is a trivial message to a man who never knew her or her husband But to the man who married her and loved and lost her it is a message of tremendous import, it is a message of hope and comfort and an earnest of a hereafter of ineffable happiness

As my wife said to me "I am talking about all these unimportant things to convince you that I visit your home, and to prove to you that you are not being deceived by telepathy" The most

trivial message is one of immense value if it helps to convince a sitter that his loved ones are not dead, and that he will meet them again. In spiritualism, as in a legal case, it is the accumulation of a number of small items of circumstantial evidence which when dovetailed together make the proof.

In a little book just published by George Allen and Unwin, "The Heart of a Father" (2s net), there is an account of a sitting with an amateur clairvoyant. The father's little boy had been drowned. The medium knew nothing about the child, but he described his remarkable eyes, his peculiar laugh, the clothes he wore, the watch his father had given him, the friends he loved and the habit he had of kneeling on and not by the bed to say his prayers. These and many other details, quite unimportant in themselves, made a deep impression on the parents. I quote the father's comment:

"Trifles!"—some will say. To a stranger, yes, but not to us, to whom these trifles were a convincing proof that the boy associated with them was reminding us of them, and that he was really alive."

Circumstances alter cases. One who has lost no dear wife, or child, or friend will approach the spiritualist evidence for survival in a very different mood from one who has suffered a crushing bereavement and is seeking for hope in his sorrow. For many of us the question of survival resolves itself into the personal question of whether we shall meet our wife or child again. No evidence

which helps us to sustain so magnificent a hope can be disdained as trivial

Do such bereavements render us more credulous ? I doubt it I think the very preciousness of the hope leads us to be cautious in our investigations lest the heat of our desire deceive us into fond illusions

And from a man who has no affectionate interest in the other plane, who has had no personal experience of spiritualist phenomena, and has always been a sceptic from habit and training, it were absurd to expect sudden and unquestioning faith in what to him are strange and unreasonable theories We have no better reason for ridiculing or censuring a sceptic than the sceptic has for ridiculing or censuring us. Speaking for myself, I must confess that the old doubt dies hard, and that in spite of the weight of evidence and the keenness of desire I find myself wavering in my faith and reasoning back to my old materialism I can quite realize how necessary it became for the Israelites to hold up the arms of the praying Aaron during the long-disputed battle

Phenomena which seem trivial may in any scientific investigation lead to important discoveries To one indifferent to astronomy the fact that a distant planet was a few minutes late in its orbit would seem unimportant , to the astronomer it meant an unknown cause, and led to the finding of another planet Herschel said -“ Pay great attention to the things that ought not to happen ” According to the materialist, messages from the dead ought not to happen He will admit, though,

that if they do happen materialism must be discarded

The question to be decided, then, is the question of whether the messages received through mediums are genuine. That question must be settled, as other problems in science are settled, by the weight and value of the evidence. So far materialists have failed to invalidate the evidence. There is more proof of survival than of most of the accepted natural laws. In a court of justice such an accumulation of evidence would condemn a saint.

But before a juryman can weigh the evidence he must hear and see it, before the judge can sum up he must hear both sides of the case. The opinion of a critic who has never read a spiritualist book nor attended a séance is mere impertinence. When we consider the tremendous importance of the matter in dispute it seems impossible that men, as deeply concerned as we are, should dismiss the great promise and the great consolation without giving them a tithe of the attention they would devote to the form of a racehorse or the protestations of a plausible politician.

In the investigation of an issue of such a serious nature there is no room for flippancy and all recrimination is worthless. On both sides it is essential that we should "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." The scientific methods of the Stanislaus are useless, we shall not convince a sceptic by heaving a chunk of old red sandstone at his *osca maxilaria inferior*. Even on the Stanislaus such forcible argument proved ineffectual, for it is recorded of the recipient of the

geological reperree that "the subsequent proceedings interested him no more"

At the first sitting I attended it was the accumulation of trivialties which impressed me. Yet there was one incident which would not, I think, be regarded as trivial, even by the most contemptuous of sceptics. If a man's dead wife says to him directly, in her own voice, "Bob, I am here I am with you, Bob," that is only a trivial incident if it is an imposture. If it is a genuine message the slightness of its content does not matter. The fact of the message coming from one supposed to be dead, is a fact of tremendous significance. If that was really my wife who spoke to me, then the whole fabric of materialist philosophy is dust and ashes, and the claims of spiritualism are established as true. To call such a demonstration trivial is to be guilty of trifling of the silliest kind.

Trivial? If one spiritual message, no matter how slight in itself, is genuine, it constitutes a revelation of vital consequence to the whole world. Who can measure the effect of such a revelation upon the religions and politics of men? Faith in human survival might abolish war, might abolish poverty, might revolutionize all human relationships. Trifles? Is death a trifle, and the fear and foreknowledge of death are those trifles? Is the hope of another and a better life in a better world a trifle? Yet the most trivial of spiritualist messages, if it be genuine, means that and more than that.

One day a young man watching a kettle boil

noticed that steam caused the lid to rise and fall
What a trifling fact What a trifling observation
And had not all of us noticed the same thing?
Of course But we were busy about important
matters the price of yarn, the Mudshire election,
the odds on the Derby! Trifles? If a medium
gives me messages she gives me messages How
or from whom does she get them? Never mind
the nature of the messages What really matters
is their origin

Those messages did not originate in my sub-
consciousness, and they could not originate in the
mind of the medium But they had an origin
and materialist science has not yet discovered it
There are no trifles in this connection The most
trivial-seeming message, if proved, would change
the destiny of the entire human race

The claims of the spiritualists cannot be lightly
set aside, the witnesses are too numerous and too
intelligent Fairminded inquirers will take nothing
without proof As Sir Oliver Lodge puts the case
in his book, so I would put it He says

"I assert emphatically that there is evidence for sur-
vival, and that some of the evidence is thoroughly good
It can no more be treated superficially than any other of
our scientific experiences It has to be examined with
caution and patience and critical care, but with an open,
not a closed mind Prepossessions and prejudices, hopes
and desires in either direction, must be put aside The
study must be entered on with humility, with a certainty
that, whatever else is doubtful, our present conceptions of
existence do not exhaust the infinitude of things, and with
more than a suspicion that our present knowledge of the
universe is such as to leave us with a very inadequate
conception of the majesty of existence"

I can only say for myself that I have for several years investigated spiritualism in the spirit Sir Oliver recommends I have tested again and again the evidence I got at my sittings, trying to explain it upon some ground other than that of spirit-communication So far I have found no other explanation

Canon Symes would, perhaps, class Sir Oliver Lodge's work with that he finds "ridiculous" and "frivolous" Some of us who have read many spiritualist books would venture to question this ruling He has found "nothing that is of the slightest use to anybody" I have found wisdom and learning and fine literary gifts

There is, for instance, "The Divine Pedigree of Man," by Prof Hudson, which is a work on the evolution of the soul This book is as sane and scientific as Darwin's "Origin of Species" It may be that at some future time it will be considered of equal importance with that masterpiece

Then there is the two-volume edition of "Human Personality," by F W H Myers That is another masterly work, by a highly cultured and abnormally intellectual man And there is Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," which is a clever and logical study of the relationship between spiritualist beliefs and natural law, and there are three books by Mr Jas Arthur Hill, of Bradford, which are as remarkable for their personal modesty and judicial fairness as for their deep human interest and ordered presentation of evidence

All Mr Hill's books are reasonable, temperate, and honest thoroughly sane. But let us test some others. I opened "The Divine Pedigree of Man" at hazard, and came upon a passage dealing with the evidence of a famous American surgeon who had found, by surgical experiment, that the instinctive faculties do not exist in the brain. Dr Hudson, who, as a mere spiritualist, should only talk foolishly or madly gives us this

"He has succeeded in demonstrating duality of mind by the use of the scalpel, and that is the favourite instrument of the material scientists when they set out in search for the human soul. And they have cut and carved, weighed and measured, and chemically analysed the brains of men living and dead, and because they failed to find a soul in the brain they dogmatically declare that man has no soul. Dr Hammond, however, has demonstrated that they have all along been looking for it in the wrong place, but, as he was not looking for a soul at the time, he did not recognize it when he found it."

Rather a pretty wit, for an asylum. I wonder what Professor Hudson would have said to Canon Symes.

Professor Drummond wrote, on the subject of spontaneous generation

"These experiments have practically closed the question. A decided and authoritative conclusion has now taken its place in science. So far as science can settle anything this question is settled. The attempt to get the living out of the dead has failed. Spontaneous generation has had to be given up. And it is now recognised on every hand that Life can only come from the touch of Life."

There is no madness and rubbish there. It is

just cool reason clearly expressed And cool reason is what we want Cool reason and careful investigation directed to the vital issues of survival and communication

Let us concentrate on the main problem It is unwise to "ask for too much at the wishing gate" I see in Mr Bradley's book, "Towards the Stars," he asks one Spirit Guide how we shall fare with regard to sex love on the spiritual plane I am not worrying about such matters All I ask is a passage with Brother Charon , I will do the rest

Is there another life and shall we find again those we have lost, and shall we meet again those who follow us across the Styx ? Those are the great questions We may contentedly leave the details to adjust themselves "Ah, moon of my delight that knowest no wane," one garden will serve as well as another. Are not all gardens fair ? Why, what said old Omar "The wilderness were Paradise now." That is enough for a mere man, and much more than most of us deserve, and I, for one, will not ask for golden slippers to walk the golden street

In April, 1922, Dean Inge made a bitter attack on spiritualism in "The Evening Standard" From that article I have preserved the following sentence

"By a curious contradiction, of which history has seen other examples there is a widespread want of faith in the Christian revelation combined with an outburst of puerile superstition which carries us back to the mentality of the primitive barbarians "

Amongst men of the mentality of primitive bar-

barians the Dean would have to include such intellectual lights as, Sir Wm Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professors Barrett, Hudson and Drummond, and F W H Myers. Perhaps he would tell us as we are often told that the opinions of men of science are valueless because they are not men of the world and are credulous. Any stick will do to beat a dog. When we remark that such men as W M Thackeray, Felix Faure, Emile Zola, Alexandre Dumas, and Sir Edward Marshall Hall are men of the world, we are shut up by the retort that their opinions are valueless because they are not men of science. But I think Dean Inge is the first to compare such minds with the minds of the Troglodytes or the Australian Bushmen.

And is it quite logical for a Christian minister to describe the beliefs of spiritualists as "peurile superstition"? From an agnostic such language might be logical, if unkind, but why is a belief in a future life religion in a dean and superstition in a layman? Dean Inge believes in a soul and in the soul's survival of death, so do the spiritualists. The spiritualist books tell us that spirits return after death, so do the Bible and the Testament. I suspect that Dean Inge's resentment arises from a feeling that spiritualism is not respectable.

The fact is spiritualism is not orthodox. That is why so many churchmen reject and condemn it.

In the matter of belief in survival, the difference between the orthodox Christian and the spiritualist inquirer is the difference between faith and evidence. The Churches think faith is enough. I would respectfully question that idea. If the

Churches say we ought to have faith, that may pass, but to say we have faith is, I think, to say more than is true of the vast majority of professing Christians. Of the millions who profess to believe in a hereafter and of the tens of thousands who think they believe, how many do believe really and truly, as we say, at the back of their heads?

The Rev G Vale Owen, in his book, "Facts and the Future Life," page 37, utters some winged words on this subject of faith or knowledge. A widow wrote him a letter in which she complained that the Church taught so little about the after life. She had lost a beloved child, and found she could not believe what she had all her life thought she believed. The Rev G Vale Owen makes the following remarks

"It is no use pointing to the New Testament in such cases as the above and telling the people that faith is sufficient. Letters like this show quite plainly that it is not sufficient. I know some say that if it is not sufficient it ought to be. Well, all I can say is that they may be right. But, if they are right, then Jesus was wrong. For He came back to the Disciples after His death for the very purpose of proving that 'the fact of intercourse with the dead had been established'."

I think ministers of religion are too prone to accept without test the faith of the members of their flocks. In my opinion real faith is very rare, and proofs of survival as given in spiritualist phenomena would greatly fortify the Christian Churches.

Science has destroyed so many of the old dogmas that the masses have largely fallen into indifference or doubt. Proof, by evidence, that the soul

survives bodily death would work a great change in public feeling

Some years ago several thousands of adults of different classes were canvassed on the subject of a future life. Were they anxious to survive, or would they rather not survive, or were they merely indifferent? Question IV "Do you now feel the question of a future life to be of urgent importance to your mental comfort?" was answered by 3,321 persons. Of these 2,007 answered in the negative and 1,314 in the affirmative. The result was a surprise for the inquirers. But ought we to be surprised? Let us put the question in another form. Let us ask, would you like to live your life over again? And I fancy we shall get an overwhelming chorus of noes.

I have been a very lucky man. I have been happy beyond the average, much happier than I have deserved to be. But if I were offered the chance to be born again into this world I should not take it. If I were offered another life in another world I should decline without hesitation unless I could be assured of reunion with those I have known and loved in this life. That, I think, is the test. We do not want survival for our own sakes, and to those who have none they love better than themselves the promise of a future life is but a languid lure.

It is, however, the idea of spirit communication that seems to give most annoyance. And I cannot understand why, unless because to the crowd it is an unfamiliar belief. Many who believe, or imagine they believe that the soul survives bodily

death spurn the claim that such immortal souls can manifest themselves to other souls still condemned "in this clay carcase crippled to abide" To me the idea of immortality seems more wonderful than the idea of communication As a materialist I found it harder to accept the soul than the powers of the soul What more natural than that a soul "passed over" should wish to send a message of cheer and comfort to those who mourn his loss?

But, it will be objected, such messages do not come And that is the point at issue Spiritualists say the messages do come And if the messages come that proves the survival of the soul which, I should suppose, is just what the churches need to have proved But perhaps they do not want it proved by laymen

Observe, please, this curious challenge, quoted in "Light" of June 7, 1924, from "The Catholic Times"

"The following challenge may be made to Mr Blatchford and all other spiritists, that they cannot produce any evidential tests by which the phenomena of spiritism can be verified as conveying true messages

"Telepathy, defective observation, sheer fraud, these and other explanations, no doubt, cover a huge proportion of facts, or alleged facts, of spiritists' seances Our present object, however, is not to produce the actual explanations of particular cases, but to do that which, after all, is only proper, i.e., to 'cast the burden of proof' on spiritists themselves

"They do not simply say that human personality survives death They say also that 'actual messages come from the dead,' and they build philosophical and religious theories thereon Our challenge is that they can produce

no tests of the truth of such messages, even if the messages really come, nor can they prove they come from the person from whom they pretend to come"

I call that a curious challenge because it comes from a Catholic paper I do not profess to "prove" that messages I have had are from spirits nor that they are from those they are supposed to come from I am an amateur and a novice, and am myself seeking proof

I have had certain messages purporting to come from friends who have died, I give a faithful report of those messages and a candid consideration of the reasons why they seem to me to be credible, and I answer such criticisms as have come my way There is the evidence, let each reader weigh it for himself But proof? No A message which seems to me to come from my wife may really come from some spirit impersonating her, but still that would be an instance of spirit communication It is a matter in which each recipient of a message must use his own reason and decide on the probabilities for himself

Yet, as I said, such a challenge strikes me as strange, coming from such a source We can and do give more substantial and credible evidence for our messages than the Catholic Church can give for the Catholic faith

For instance, on the same page of "Light" there is a quotation from a volume of the Catholic "Series of Books for Children and Young Persons," which I requote in full

"This is the sentence Depart from me wicked child, go away from me You shall never, never see my face

any more You have chosen during your earth-time to obey the Devil rather than me Therefore with the Devil you shall be tormented in hell The smoke of your torments shall rise up before me night and day, your painful cries shall come up to me for ever and ever, but I will never listen to them

" Jesus Christ now lets the Devil know that the child no longer belongs to him, but to them

" There is a fearful and terrible darkness The thickest, blackest darkness fills all the skies But the child sees devils Thousands and millions on every side coming around it It cannot get away from them On they come more swiftly than the wind, like hungry dogs would come to a bone

" The devils are lifting the child up to throw it into hell The child's brain gets mad with fright! It shrieks It cries out It roars, ' Oh, do not throw me into hell Let me go back I will be so good ' The devils laugh at it and scoff, as only devils can scoff Again the child cries, ' I cannot, I will not ' The Gates of Hell are shut The child is in the inside, burning "

I am unable to produce a spirit as a test As M Camille Flammarion points out, we cannot produce an earthquake, a thunderstorm, or an eclipse But can the " Catholic Times " produce a devil ?

The Catholic Church seems to indulge in a prodigality of devils Millions of devils sent by a merciful Jesus to torture and terrify one little child But what proof is there of the truth of such a revolting story ? Can the " Catholic Times " produce even one small devil as a test ? Only one little one ?

The Catholic faith in devils equals Canon Symes' faith in thought-reading When I said, after my first personal experience, that only the spiritualist

theory covered all the facts, a Catholic friend wrote to me with deep earnestness to say that the Catholic Church has a theory which covers all the facts and that is the theory of devils. Devils, he assured me, can read all our thoughts, can take any shape and speak in any voice. Mrs Leonard, the medium, was in the service of the devil Feda, the control, was a devil. When I thought I heard my wife's voice speak to me it was the voice of a devil mocking and tempting me. What a sad and terrible faith! Still if any of my fellow-creatures holds such a faith, I can only accept his decision with respectful astonishment. For myself I prefer to be on the side of the angels.

Mr A. Leonard Summers, author of "The Fallacies of Spiritualism," is also fond of asking questions and framing challenges. In the second chapter he wants to know "What is really a 'spirit'?" "How is it possible to understand whether it is the real thing or not?"

When we use the term "spirit" we mean a human being who has passed out of the body. We do not mean a "ghost" or an angel. We do not mean a "supernatural being." The spirit of the late Edward Francis Fay is just Edward Francis Fay released from his physical body. That is what we mean by a spirit, and so far as my information goes, that is all we know about spirits.

"How is it possible to know a spirit and to understand whether it is the real thing or not?" Apart from the phenomena of materialization, of which I have no experience, we can only know or judge a spirit to be a spirit by the evidence of

personality and the proof of knowledge which the spirit affords

Conversing with a spirit through a medium is like conversing with a Frenchman on the telephone through the medium of an English-speaking operator. We are rung up by the operator, who tells us in English that a friend of ours, a Frenchman, has a message for us. We ask "Is that M Rollet?" and the clerk answers, "Monsieur Rollet is here." Then we converse with Rollet through the clerk. How can we know it is Rollet? We cannot *know*. We can only judge from what Rollet asks us or tells us.

It is the same with a spirit. We may be deceived. Some other spirit or the medium may impersonate our friend. But such impersonation has its limits.

Another gentle inquiry - "How is it possible to know an honest medium from a dishonest one?" We can only judge mediums as we judge other people. How is it possible to know an honest man or woman from a dishonest one? We have to make the best estimate we can from a person's face, voice, manner, and conduct. We frequently make mistakes. All the rogues and cheats in the world are not mediums, there are others.

One more question "Why must spirits and mediums have darkness?"

There are many mediums who demonstrate in broad daylight. I can understand that a trance medium prefers darkness, just as we prefer darkness when we want to sleep. But the lady I have sat with does not require darkness, only a subdued

light As I sit with her I can see to read and write, I can see her face and all the motions of her hands

We are alone in the room There is no machinery of any kind It is just a small suburban parlour with a closed and curtained bay window and a closed door There is no chance of trickery I have not the least doubt that if the lady had her eyes covered she would succeed just as well in broad sunshine as in a thin dusk

The operations of light are mysterious Science is only beginning to understand them But it is not difficult to realize the fact that light may interfere with what is called the state of trance, for in the state of trance the supra-liminal (above the threshold consciousness) must be put out of action As Sir William Barrett explains it in "On the Threshold of the Unseen" "All I wish to point out here is that mediumship depends on the emergence of the subconscious life, and therefore the ordinary waking consciousness must be more or less passive" Is not that both reasonable and clear? The waking consciousness must sleep that the subliminal consciousness may act, or rather that it may be in a condition for the control to act upon it And when we wish to sleep we draw the blinds On the rare occasions when I have wanted to doze in the daytime I have covered my eyes with a handkerchief

But we are often asked "Why is a medium necessary at all? Why cannot a spirit speak to us direct, without a go-between?"

Well, first let us recognize the facts Those on

the other side do not speak to us without a medium I waited nearly two years for a message and I got nothing Then I went to a medium and got more than I expected To get messages by word of mouth through a medium is quite common To get messages by word of mouth without a medium is something which I believe no one has succeeded in doing

Why? The spirit has not a mortal tongue If a spirit can speak we cannot hear But when a spirit "controls" a medium he or she speaks with the medium's tongue Strange? Yes All spiritual phenomena are strange So are some physical phenomena

Take wireless as an example For thousands of years sounds have travelled along ether waves and mankind did not know it What was needed was a couple of instruments, one to send and one to receive the sounds It is the same with spirit messages.

The "control" is the sender at the spiritual end The medium is the receiver Without those two instruments verbal messages could not come through Raps can come through a kind of Morse signalling, but not spoken words

But, it may be asked, why have some persons mediumistic powers? I don't know Why have some persons abnormal musical or poetical powers? The fact remains that mediums exist, and they get messages As to the verity of such messages one can only judge from personal experience One of my friends says that to him it is incredible Well, to me it is not incredible, because it has happened.

32 MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

But it seemed incredible to me until it did happen
We cannot believe at secondhand

Mr F Brittain, the well-known psychic author and teacher, has kindly sent me his series of textbooks on Psychosensics, the first of which contains an introduction which helps us to understand the difficult problems of mediumship Mr Brittain tells us that many, or perhaps all, human beings have psychic powers, though in most cases they are dormant He claims that these powers can be cultivated and that we may all of us become by training more or less clairvoyant or clairaudient Possibly, he suggests, the struggle for existence, during long ages, has caused us to rely almost wholly upon sensory perceptions to the neglect of our psychic or etheric perceptions

I understand from his introduction that we have, each of us, two sets of wireless receivers, one for material and the other for immaterial phenomena In order to receive impressions with the etheric set we must shut down, or disregard, the sensory set. This I can endorse in a small way Many of us have had at times to write or think in a noisy room When I first joined the press, my office was so situated that everyone going to the Editorial or sub-Editorial rooms had to pass through mine The traffic was continuous and the conversation in the other rooms added to the effect of the interruptions To cope with this difficulty I shut all sounds out of my consciousness and wrote as though I were alone in a quiet place I suppose most of us have had some such experience It means concentration What is concentration?

It is an act of partial self-hypnotism. The cultivation of such self-hypnosis is Mr. Brittain's method for training psychic powers. This explains the trance. A trance medium must shut off the consciousness in order to leave the subconsciousness free for exploitation by the control.

But let us approach the engrossing subject of auto-suggestion from a personal point of observation. Auto-suggestion can be achieved by concentration. Resolute and sustained concentration can hold the conscious mind in abeyance and allow the sub-mind to work. Prof. Erskine says:

"It also appears that memory is connected and enhanced by the determination of what we call 'will power,' which is concentration. If we concentrate our faculties absolutely to remember something we shall find that just as far as complete concentration goes towards remembering, so will be the result, and particularly if we concentrate our thought just before sleep."

I am like the French gentleman who was surprised to hear that he had been talking prose all his life.

I have for more than fifty years been employing a kind of semi-self-hypnotism without knowing it. I once had a clue offered to me, but did not grasp it. I had been telling some army experiences to friends, and A. M. Thompson, a colleague, said to me "These scenes and people must have photographed themselves on your memory."

That word photographed was the clue and I missed it. When I want to remember I stop thinking. I only listen and feel and see. I am an unobservant man. Moss had grown in one of our

garden paths We used weed-killer Every day after that I would think "I must see if that moss is gone" Yet, though I walked down the path more than once every morning, I never noticed the effect of the killer until after six weeks I set out from the house on purpose to look I am as unobservant as that

But when I want to see, or to remember, I can do it effectively But I see without looking, and I hear without consciously heeding

For instance, I walked through a surgical ward in the hospital for facial wounds, and never turned my head right or left But I saw the wounds and the blood, and I have never forgotten There was a man on my right with his lower lip cleft in two and his tongue protruding just a hideous crimson gash A nurse was feeding him She had flaxen hair, long taper fingers, a beautiful white neck The man had grey eyes, thin eyebrows, reddish-brown hair, and small ears His brow was furrowed with lines of pain How did I see all that? I don't know I saw many other cases just as vividly and without looking

The following words, from my article on the facial hospital, written in June, 1918, contain a hint of half-conscious auto-hypnosis "To this refuge are sent officers and men who have been disfigured by shell-fragments, shrapnel, or machine-gun bullets And I was to look over the place and talk to the men! I funk'd it horribly My confounded imagination got the bit in its teeth I knew what I was in for I knew that I could not talk to the men. I knew that the two-column

picture had got to be realized in the form of hypnotic suggestion."

When I was writing about spiritualism a year or two ago, before I had made any personal tests, Mr Filson Young intervened. He said, as many others have said, that any of the spiritualistic phenomena can be produced by conjurers. That is a gross exaggeration. No spiritualistic phenomena can be produced by conjurers. A conjurer can produce imitations of some phenomena, but a mask is not a human face.

The fact that a manifestation can be produced by trickery does not prove that the manifestation was a trick.

A man says he has seen a ghost. "Rubbish," says the conjurer, "I can produce the illusion of a ghost by a trick." Doubtless the conjurer would be as good as his word, but he would only produce a tricky illusion. He would not produce the ghost the man had seen, nor would he prove that the man had not seen one.

The conjurer's ghost would be produced by mechanical means, but it would not be a ghost. And the man who saw the ghost did not see it by mechanical means. "You say that is a diamond ring. Why, here is one of paste so like it that you cannot tell one from the other." Granted, but the paste is not diamond, nor is the diamond paste.

What I want to know is, does my dead friend still live, and, if so, is it possible for me to communicate with him? I dare say Mr Maskelyne, or any clever conjurer, could produce an illusion clever enough to deceive me, but that does not

answer my question, nor content the hunger of my soul

A conjurer can produce an illusion of a ghost I have seen it done But he must have his own conditions Now, suppose a man sees the ghost of his father come into his drawing-room in broad daylight, or thinks he sees him Does Mr Young ask us to believe that a conjurer, standing by the man's side at the time, could produce a fictitious ghost of his father, at once and on the spot? No The man sees a ghost, or fancies he sees a ghost, but it is not a conjurer's ghost, and the ghost produced by a conjurer proves nothing and has no bearing upon the case at all

The fact that a clever ventriloquist can deceive us on the stage has no earthly bearing upon Sir Oliver Lodge's belief that he has conversed with his dead son A man tells me he has seen and spoken with his dead wife Either he has done what he says, or he has imagined it, or he is lying Ventriloquism is no explanation

I cannot begin to believe that the cleverest conjurer could have told me what I was told during my first sitting with a medium How or whence these messages came I cannot tell But I am as thoroughly convinced that they were not and could not be produced by trickery as I am that the moon I see through my bedroom window was not painted by Mr Joseph Harker

Many critics of spiritualism expect the spirits of the dead to be omniscient But that is unreasonable These spirits are only human beings who have left the body

Spiritualists believe in "the survival of the personality" They believe that the soul after death is the same soul as the soul before death

When I die I shall not change miraculously into a stained-glass saint, nor shall I suddenly develop the intellect of a Plato or a Shakespeare- My spiritual body will differ in essential from my material body, but my mind will there, as here, take time to alter or develop Such is the theory of the spiritualists, and it seems to me a natural and logical belief

If my personality does survive it will be my personality and not the personality of Sir Isaac Newton or St Francis of Assisi If a man is unintelligent in this life he will not be instantly changed by death into a genius or a sage The spirits with whom the spiritualists are supposed to communicate are the spirits of men and women, and must not be expected to converse with the tongues of angels, nor to possess the wisdom of the prophets

We may expect, then, if we are granted the extreme happiness of speaking with our departed friends, that they will display the same qualities of heart and mind for which we loved them when they still were with us

This expectation of spiritual wisdom and intellect is another form of the objection that spirit messages tell us nothing John Smith when he dies does not become Confucius or Newton He can only think and speak in the manner and with the ability of John Smith We must not ask him for Iliads or Novum Organums And it is the

same with Mrs Smith Suppose Mrs Smith has died and John gets into touch with her what would he be likely to ask? I think he would ask her if she were happy, what kind of a place she had gone to, could she visit the earth plane, could she see him and the children, did she think of them? When these questions had been answered I expect the couple would talk of their love for each other, of their hope of a future reunion Perhaps the wife would give John messages to the children or advice as to his business or his conduct I do not suppose that Mrs Smith would launch out into melting eloquence about the pulsating radiance of the fourth dimension or the ineffable effulgence of the unattainable, because the dear soul would know nothing about such things, and they would bore John to tears

Quite possibly Mrs Smith gives her husband but a vague and sketchy idea of her new home That does not content the critic The critic is like the New York reporter who boards the liner and asks the distinguished visitor before he has landed "What do you think, sir, of our country and our institutions?" Perhaps the new land is very big and the little woman has not seen more than a corner of it Perhaps it is so unlike our world that she does not know how to describe it If she is happy and if it is good to be there, John will be well content

And Mary, bless her, will be thinking more of John and of the children than of the astral landscape "Yes, I am alive Yes, I am happy Yes, I love you Yes, I will meet you when you

come" What a heart-filling, soul-satisfying message The jasper seas, the lilyed meadows, and the celestial hills one can wait for But about one's loved one, one wants to know

And when it happened that my wife got speech with me she was just as practical, just as cheerful, and just as unobtrusively affectionate as I expected her to be She spoke of familiar things in familiar terms and displayed her old interest in domestic matters and in the welfare of her girls And how surprised and incredulous I should have been if she had begun to talk like George Eliot or Harriet Martineau It was my wife I wanted to hear from, not a literary or scientific genius As Slushy says in the Jacob's story "Some of you are so hard to please"

And how absolute some critics are When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was in America, Dr Ray Lyman Wilbur said

"There is no scientific basis for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's claims to spirit-communication Nobody has ever seen a ghost Nothing has ever been checked up by science to prove the spirit hypothesis"

There we have it the denial positive, the check dogmatic Nobody has ever seen a ghost! But there are hundreds of thousands of intelligent and honourable persons in the world who are prepared to swear that they have seen ghosts and have spoken with them

Sir Wm Crookes, a real man of science, testified that he was in constant communication with a ghost for a period of two years That ghost, Sir

William and his friends declared, visited his laboratory, walked from room to room, shook them by the hand, talked with them and vanished before their eyes I don't know how science "checks things up," but if the ghost of Katie King was not checked up by science the world is sadly given to lying

Had Dr Wilbur told us that he never saw a ghost, he would have been speaking credibly and in reason I have never seen a ghost But I am not prepared to deny the statements of the crowds of women and men who say they have seen one Mere flat contradiction is not argument

Another of Sir Arthur's critics made the blunt assertion that all so-called spiritual phenomena are due to the imagination!

Did Sir Wm Crookes imagine Katie King, and did all the other witnesses imagine her? A man might imagine he saw a black dog on his hearth, but if all the members of his family saw it, if the dog barked, if the maids and the coachman stroked the dog and the dog wagged his tail, the word imagination would not satisfy him Such a confederated imagination would be more wonderful than the actual presence of the spirit of someone who had passed over, and survived

A medium tells me that a pair of shoes are not in a cupboard where I believe them to be I go home and find the shoes are not there Where does the imagination come in? Did I imagine that the medium told me the shoes were gone? Or did the medium imagine that I thought the shoes were there? Or did she imagine that the

shoes had been moved? Why should her imagination, or mine, have been troubled about a pair of shoes?

Such bald assertions are valueless. They are,—in fact, mere excuses sharked up in haste to account for the strange happenings which cannot be explained away and can only be met by unsupported denial.

Let us return to Katie King. Katie King is a puzzle. But we cannot get rid of her by saying that Sir William Crookes imagined her, or that she never existed, or that she was the medium disguised. That is mere evasion. Let us take the facts as stated by reputable witnesses.

Katie King was a spirit who appeared in the laboratory of Sir Wm Crookes under the severest test conditions. She was seen in the presence of the medium, Florence Cook. She was seen by many witnesses. She walked about the room and talked. She was photographed. She took Sir William's arm and gave him a lock of her hair which he cut from her head. She took Florence Marryatt on her knee. She continued these manifestations for two years. Sir Wm Crookes counted the beating of her heart and the time of her pulse. She was not at all like the medium, Florence Cook was "a mere slip of a girl" of about sixteen. Katie King was a well-made woman of twenty-four. She stood six inches higher than Miss Cook. She had a profusion of auburn hair, whereas Miss Cook's hair was nearly black. She was fair, Miss Cook was dark. When she first appeared she was dressed in white, while Miss Cook wore black velvet. Of

one occasion, Sir William Crookes writes thus
"Katie never appeared to greater perfection. For two hours she talked and walked about the room conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm, and the impression given was that of a living woman."

Katie King is so wonderful that instead of being a means of carrying conviction to inquirers she has been a stumbling-block. She is too wonderful and the effect of her recorded appearance is well expressed in a letter from a friend of mine

"You have read this document and can see the difficulties. From a fragile medium—fragile both physically and mentally—comes a big bouncing woman of strong characteristics. Her weight is given by Sir William as something far and away heavier than that of the medium. From her dress Sir William snips a sample for preservation, and from her head a lock of hair. Where did Katie King get her avordupois from? And has dress material a spiritual counterpart, capable of being preserved after the spirit itself has de-materialized? No one but a fool would think of charging Sir William Crookes with being a fool, or a liar, but Katie King presents a problem to the uninitiated."

My correspondent says Katie King presents a problem to the unititated. That is true. But the ether presents a problem to the uninitiated. In fact, almost all natural phenomena present problems to the uninitiated and to the initiated as well. In the May "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," Sir Oliver Lodge answers M Richet's denial of human survival. The following lines suggest that Katie King is not the only

phenomenon which "no fellah can be expected to understand"

"Strictly speaking, we cannot understand anything fully and completely in terms of matter alone. By concentrating on matter we eliminate from our thoughts the greater part of the Universe. The Universe contains many things besides matter. It contains magnetism and electricity and light and ether, it also contains life and thought and mind and consciousness and memory and personality and character. None of these things is material, and yet, strangely enough, some of them have come into association with matter through the curious biological process of Incarnation. For a time intelligences do inhabit material bodies which, by barely known processes, they have unconsciously constructed."

I cannot explain the mysteries of nature. Who can? There are many mysteries and we have much to learn.

What is matter? We do not know. What is energy? We do not know. What is the universe? We do not know. What is the Milky Way? We do not know. What are Canopus, Sirius, and our own sun? We do not know. What are the comets? We do not know. What is gravity? We do not know. What is centrifugal force? We do not know. Why does the earth spin on its axis? We do not know. What is polar magnetism? We do not know. What is a spiral nebular? We do not know. What is the globular cluster in Hercules? We do not know. What are time, space, and eternity? We do not know. What is consciousness? We do not know. What is the subliminal consciousness? We do not know. What is love? We do not know. What is pity?

We do not know What is thought? We do not know What is imagination? We do not know What are dreams? We do not know What is genius? We do not know What is Life? We do not know

I suppose nobody will pretend that Sir William Crookes and the scores of educated men and women who met Katie King were in "a conspiracy to defraud". It was impossible for the medium to impersonate a bigger woman than herself, who was present in the room and awake whilst the medium was unconscious. All the witnesses could not have imagined Katie King, nor could they have gone on imagining her time after time for two years. And could a camera take a photograph of an imaginary figure?

Yet if we do not believe the story of Katie King how can we explain that story away? And if we do believe the story then we must believe that Katie King was an embodied spirit and that all the spiritualists' claims are established.

As for myself, I do not pretend to account for Katie King. I do not think she has ever been accounted for. Neither has electricity. Neither has poetry or music been accounted for. By what mental process did Handle evolve the Hallelujah Chorus? How did Shakespeare dream the character of Hamlet? Where did Keats get the "Ode to the Nightingale"? How does a baby grow into a man? In the early stages children are neutral in sex. Who or what decides they shall be boys or girls? I don't know. Nobody does know.

For my part I do not worry about Katie King. I don't care whether she was a substantial body or a wraith. What I am seeking is the answer to the double question do we survive death and shall we meet again the loved ones who have "drunk their cup a round or two before"? The woman about whom I am anxious was not christened Kate.

"We have each of us our own enigmas. We live amongst wonders, did we only know it. At a sitting at Barnet, on the 1st of June, 1924, I put a question to the control, Feda. "A medium told a friend of mine, Feda, that when I am asleep my wife comes and fetches me on to the other plane. Is that true?"

And Feda said "It is true. Your lady says because you were so long and so close together it is easy for her to fetch you. All those years mean something. It was not only that you were man and wife, but you had grown together. Many nights she fetches you. But sometimes you sleep lightly, then she cannot fetch you. And when you wake you do not remember. But some day she will let you remember."

"But Feda," I said, "I shall only think it was a dream." And Feda answered "No. You remember a little now. But it is mixed in the confusion of dreams. But she will some day make you to know that you have been with her."

This incident put me to my purgations. Could it be true? If so, if my wife's spirit can call my spirit out of my body while I sleep that is just as

marvellous as the appearance of Katie King But how can it happen ?

I consulted a pamphlet by Mr C W Leadbeater " To Those Who Mourn," which seemed to throw a pale glimmer of light on the mystery

The writer says that those on the spiritual plane can see only our spiritual bodies, and he continues

" When we are what we call asleep, our consciousness is using that vehicle, and so to the dead man we are awake But when we transfer our consciousness to the physical body, it seems to the dead man that we fall asleep because though he still sees us, we are no longer paying any attention to him or able to communicate with him

" Precisely similar is the condition of the living man, while he is awake in the eyes of the dead Because we cannot usually remember in our waking consciousness what we have seen during sleep we are under the delusion that we have lost our dead but they are never under the delusion that they have lost us, because they can see us all the time "

The general idea underlying the theory of sleep travel seems to be something like this The spiritual plane, I understand, is not placed at a great distance, as we estimate distance, and the spirits of those who have left us are really close at hand could we but see them

When a spirit visits a living friend in his sleep and leads him on to the spiritual plane, he does not necessarily take him out of the room he lies in Every man is a spirit, and when he sleeps his spirit is no longer dominated by the body The gates of the fleshly dwelling are open, and the spirit moves out into the spiritual plane much

as the subconsciousness moves out into dream-land.

If a man's wife fetches his spirit in his sleep she does not take him for a long tramp over the moors, nor for a flight across the Andes. Together they travel as we travel in dreams, wherein we can climb precipices or swim rivers, or ride in trains without lifting hand or foot out of the blankets.

In dreams we can see, but we do not see with our eyes. The room is dark and our eyes are shut, but we can see the face of our long-dead friend, or we can see a river bank, or a timbered house, or a gigantic French poodle with his hair in curl-papers. And we can walk and climb and swim and even fly and we can fall. We speak too, without using our tongue, or making a sound, and we can hear words spoken to us, which a wakeful watcher by our bedside could not hear.

So that while the idea that we may spend hours of our sleeping time with spirits on the spirit plane may startle us, I really do not see on reflection that we ought to regard the suggestion as impossible when we remember the wonderful experiences we call dreams.

Who has fathomed all the mysteries contained in the philosophy of dreams? How do we see and hear without eyes or ears? *What* do we see and hear? Do we without eyes see something which is not there? Do we without ears hear words that are never uttered? I do not suggest that all our dreams are realities, they are too illogical and wild for that. But what are they?

Still, those weird journeyings by night, if they are more than dreams, present a problem to the uninitiated

I have a friend whose wife's spirit quits her body at night and travels for miles. But not only does she travel she is visible. That is what I have been told. One night she appeared to her brother as he was going to bed. He saw her and spoke to her in his own house at the time when she was in bed, and asleep in her house at a distance of some thirty miles. Incredible? Why? Is it any more incredible than my seeing in the dark when I am asleep the figure of a maid who never existed? And incredible or not it appears to be a fact. It has been attested time after time, by numerous witnesses of many nations and periods. And, if the spirit of a living woman can travel out of one county into another while her body is asleep in bed, why should it be impossible for a man's spirit to quit his body and visit the spiritual plane?

The philosophy of dreams is more baffling than at first sight seems likely. We have got no farther when we say "It is only a dream." We might as wisely say "It is only a spiral nebular, it is only a soul, it is only life." And is it true to say of every night vision that it is only a dream? When my friend saw the spirit of his living sister, was that a dream? If, as many believe, some of us quit our bodies and wander on the Astral Plane, is what happens to us in such adventures only a dream? If it does happen it is not a dream at all. It is because we have so long classed dreams

amongst illusions that we have made no serious attempt to solve the mystery

The mystery of the sub-mind is linked up with the mystery of dreams. The sub-mind, that inscrutable "fellow in the cellarage," wrote Hamlet's love letter and Ophelia's speeches, and the Church Litany, and the Moonlight Sonata and the "Allegro," and "Comus." And the same mysterious power paints and fashions and composes our dreams. We do not choose nor control our dreams. It is as though we wandered into a strange theatre in a strange land, not knowing upon what comedy or terror the cloudy curtain will rise. As we sink into oblivion we are only conscious as to that land of dreams that "Old Silence will keep watch upon the grass, the solemn shadows will assemble there."

Perhaps in those airy landscapes and unsubstantial towers our sub-self, our soul, has builded better than we know. Perhaps we have mixed with angels unawares. Perhaps, when we have finally "shuffled off this mortal coil," we shall recognize the shining presences and the uncharted country of our dreams as real.

Or, are they "only dreams"?

There is a dazzling prospective adventure. Think of old Omar's gibe "Why, if the soul can cast the dust aside and naked on the air of heaven ride!" Suppose it can, Omar! Or, if we deny it, how do we account for the sub-mind of the boy following his father for a lifelong day? Imagine it! Personally conducted tours to the Astral Plane. What are Thomas Cook's prospectuses to such enterprise?"

I used to enjoy a trip abroad I used to wish I could make a journey to Japan, but how tame would the Orient be, with all its wonders and seductions compared with a voyage across the ocean of Chaos and old night, a landing on "those purple islands which a sunset bore," a meeting with "some we loved, the loveliest and the best," a recrudescence of our golden youth, a tender clasping of the vanished hands, a new courtship and a renewed fellowship in the gardens of sleep Robinson Crusoe never dreamed of such romance, and even Peter Wilkins seems mild

In the days of the Pharaohs the interpreters used to read prophecies into the dreams of kings and soldiers I don't like prophecies Enough for the day, etc But this new interpretation of dreams appeals to one's love of adventure, slakes one's thirst for the marvellous, and illuminates the twilight of the gathering years with a new hope dazzling in its splendour What are Sinbad's magic carpet and valley of diamonds to this power of riding through the viewless air?

Now my much loved prelude to Alastor has taken on for me a more vivid meaning

In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love

Well, it is a most fascinating quest It keeps one busy It keeps my wonder green and my

interest alive It is a new light shining through the ambiguous darkness across the abyss of silence and the unknown , the as yet unknown

The confirmed sceptic, as I have pointed out before, is a most credulous person He will believe and accept the wildest theory and loosest statements which help him to refuse the proofs of spiritual phenomena There is the letter signed, " A Scot " in the " Clarion," July 18, 1924 " A Scot " says " Witlessly or unwittingly, all men are liars, and it is more reasonable to believe that so-called ' spirit ' phenomena are due to the folly and knavery of mankind than to believe them to be true "

Let us test this theory First, by applying it to the case of Katie King Sir William Crookes said he saw and touched and spoke to the spirit called Katie King Very well, the answer is easy he lied But Katie King was seen and touched and spoken to by many other women and men of education and position Were they all liars ? Did they, twenty or thirty of them, join Sir William Crookes in a conspiracy to foist a false story of a spirit on the public ? Is it reasonable to believe that such men and women would enter into that kind of plot ?

Is it reasonable to believe that during the long period of years since such a plot was made no one of the conspirators has ever given the secret away, and that no suspicion of the truth has ever appeared ? Katie King is, I admit, a tough problem, but not so tough as the theory that a large number of sane and decent public persons deliberately

backed up an impudent invention with a tissue of barefaced lies

Take a simpler case The case of my uncle, William Corri When I came home from my first sitting I told my daughters that Feda had described my uncle to me and had told me what he died of But I did not describe my uncle to them, as it did not occur to me The answer is that when I said Feda described William Corri to me I was lying So ?

But my youngest daughter, who knew nothing about William Corri and had no idea as to his appearance, came back from Southampton with an exact description of him Was she just lying The fact remains though to be accounted for, the fact that she gave me an exact description of a man she had never seen How does the theory of wilful falsehood cover that fact ?

"A Scot" says it is more reasonable to attribute spiritualist phenomena to the folly and knavery of mankind than to believe them to be true But how can it be reasonable to account for phenomena in that way when the folly and knavery of mankind absolutely fail to account for them ?

I say that Feda told me that Mrs John's son, Jonathan, was worried about another matter besides the death of Mrs John Was Feda lying ? Was I lying ? Were we both liars or both fools ? Then how queer that Jonathan should at once tell me, what I had not known, that he *was* worrying over another matter Do liars tell the truth ?

No one who reads the evidence contained in the

best spiritualist literature will be able to maintain that such evidence can be accounted for by falsehood, knavery, or credulous folly Such men as Professor Myers, Professor Crookes, Professor Oliver Lodge, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, W M Thackeray, Emile Zola, Alexandre Dumas and M Flammarion are not fools And it is not true that all men are liars Indeed, few men are such impudent, foolish, unscrupulous liars as they would all have to be to bear out the theory of "A Scot"

When "A Scot" puts up such a theory as an answer to spiritualism he gives his case away If Sir William Crookes and all his friends were not lying, Katie King was a spirit Now, it is quite manifestly ridiculous to pretend that they were all lying, for such a conspiracy would be impossible

Then we have, in the same "Clarion" issue, the suggestion of "J N B" that belief is not a question of fact but of mood This is the credulity plea "Nobody," says "J N B," "seems in the mood to believe the evidence until he has lost someone dear to him"

But it is a well-known fact that many prominent converts to spiritualism did not approach the subject because they had lost dear ones, but because they did not believe it, and wanted to prove it untrue They were not at all in the mood which "J N B" suggests is essential to belief They were in just the opposite mood, and they did not surrender to the evidence in a spasm of sentimental credulity, but because the evidence

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was too voluminous and too solid to be denied or explained away

There are many believers in spiritualism who have not lost anyone especially dear to them, and there are many who have lost someone very dear to them, who have not accepted the spiritualist theory, and are by no means credulous "J N B" seems to think that if a man lost his wife, or a woman her husband, they would both be in a mood to believe any evidence, no matter how flimsy I do not think so It is not so with me, and it is not so with others I know We do not want to deceive ourselves, nor to be deceived we want to *know*

Another correspondent, "F W" suggests that I should study Theosophy It is no use to me I tried it It means nothing to me too much up in the air I want facts, not theories

Which reminds me of a letter from a reader recommending a book on Christian Science He sends me a long quotation from a book by Mrs Eddy, called "Science and Health," and says this passage is the Christian Science solution of the problem of how a medium gets the messages Reduced to a few plain words the solution is that "thought-pictures" remain, and can be seen and repeated by the thought-reader

The first objection to this theory (it is only a theory for which there is no evidence) is the self-evident fact that a thought does not exist until someone has thought it, and therefore it does not account for a message which has not been thought Let us take a very simple example An old blue

china plate was broken in our house. The girls were concerned about it, as it was a precious piece of their mother's.

Now Feda told me that their mother said they were not to worry about the plate as it was a pure accident, and did not matter. How did Feda get the thought that it did not matter? The girls had never thought it did not matter.

There could not therefore be any thought-picture in existence to the effect that the girls need not worry as it did not matter. No such thought-picture being in existence, it would be impossible for the medium to see it.

There is another way out, though. My wife had thought it did not matter. But as the accident did not happen until more than a year after her death she could not have thought of it when she was alive. Now, "F.W.", when did she think it did not matter, and how did the medium see the thought? She must have read the thought of someone dead, that is to say, she must have been in touch with a spirit, and have got from that spirit a message. That is what spiritualists claim, but it does not fit the theory advanced by Mrs Eddy.

And how does the Mrs Eddy theory fare in the case of Katie King? Did the medium make Katie King out of a thought-picture? But the medium never saw Katie King, and knew nothing about her but what she was told.

The word-picture theory breaks down when we come to the phenomena known as cross messages. As, for instance, when one part of a

thought is given to a woman in India and the other part to a woman in London, and it is only when the two parts are joined that the thought means something No This theory of thought-pictures and thought-readers is just wild guess-work It is a theory based on nothing but speculation and it cannot be twisted so as to account for the messages

A soldier is reported as "missing" His people wonder is he dead, or is he a prisoner Perhaps he was blown to pieces by a shell These are some of their thoughts They go at last to a medium and are told that while crossing a river on a narrow bridge the man was shot through the brain and fell into the river and his body was never found That message could not have been seen as a thought of his friends for the river was the one thing they had never thought of It could not have been a thought of the soldier's, for he would not know what had happened—until he was dead The medium, then, could only get that message from a spirit on the other side, which is just what spiritualists say the medium does

Why go out of our way to invent fantastic theories? I see no reason at all for believing that a thought persists indefinitely Even were it possible by some occult power to see a thought, it is inconceivable that the thought should be visible after ten or a hundred years

A note struck on a piano, or the report of a rifle shot will be audible to human ears until the vibration dies beyond human hearing But such

vibrations cease. If we drop a stone into a pond the rings will spread and travel. But they do not persist for years. In a few seconds the water is at rest. Why should a thought outstay a smoke ring or the sound of a cannon shot?

The idea of spirit messages may seem wonderful, may seem incredible, but it is not unthinkable. The messages given to me by Feda were very human and very reasonable. I heard a voice speaking, and it was not at all like the voice of the medium, and it spoke of nothing that was beyond my comprehension, and it told me things which no stranger to my house and family could know, and when I asked direct questions I got sensible and credible answers. Why build up a mass of intricate machinery with visible and imperishable thoughts and marvellous thought-readers? I find it much more reasonable to suppose that Feda is just Feda and my wife my wife.

A good many years ago I read some Eastern philosophy. It left me cold. What was more disconcerting, it left me dazed. It did not seem to me to lead anywhere or mean anything. My fault, no doubt. I have an essentially English mind. I cannot juggle with abstractions, nor see dreams through a fog. That is why most of the pictures of the spirit world, as given in automatic script, only puzzle and unsettle me.

I can grasp the idea of survival. I can grasp the idea of a message sent through a medium via a control. Those ideas seem reasonable. They are at least what I call thinkable. Also, they convey a definite and welcome meaning. But the

glamour of nebulous heavens which a fakir discovers after gazing for twenty years at his navel that is not for me I am by nature too earthly and too English

A correspondent, "M," advances as an argument against survival the theory that if the soul is immortal it must have existed before the body, and he asks why none of us remembers a previous spiritual state, and why our dead do not return or send us messages

Why do our dead never communicate with us ? But the spiritualists claim that they do communicate Is it not rather a droll criticism of the claim that the dead return to ask why they don't return ?

Why does not "M" communicate with his dead ? Because he cannot ? Exactly and the dead cannot communicate with him as easily as he can communicate with me But a spiritualist will tell him that he can get into touch with his dead, or they with him, if he will adopt the proper methods

Could "M" telephone to me if I had no telephone in my house ? No And how absurd it would be for me to ask why he never rang me up How many have said to me "If my old pal had survived death he would let me know," or "I had agreed with Jim that the—one of us who went first would give the other a sign He was killed in 1917 and I have never had the sign" But these chaps ask too much They are not on the telephone Let them go to a good medium and try to get a sign

How is it we none of us remember a previous existence? There seem to be two reasonable answers to that question. First, it seems possible that we are not meant to remember. It may be, as some Orientals believe, that "the door is closed behind us."

Second, perhaps we do not remember a previous existence because there is no previous existence to remember. I cannot accept the claim that because a man's soul may survive death, it must have existed before birth. I do not think the soul did exist before the birth of the body. If the body did not exist before birth, why should the soul? If a man's body does not exist before conception it seems reasonable to believe that his soul did not exist before conception, but that the soul is conceived with the body.

A child of Romeo and Juliet would not be a replica of either parent. It would not be a Montagu nor would it be a Capulet. It would be a Montulet. Just as the child of a white and a black parent is a half-caste or mulatto.

Romeo's son would be physically like both father and mother, but not identical with either. His mind would inherit some traits of each of their minds, but would not be identical with the mind of Romeo or of Juliet. That is to say, Romeo's son is a new man with a new mind or soul. If his mind is inherited, like his body, from both parents, it is impossible that his mind (his soul) should have existed before his parents met each other.

The fact that a human soul survives death does

not prove that it existed before birth "M's" criticism, as expressed in his questions, is built up on supposition He postulates a power by which the dead can speak to us and then asks why they are silent He postulates a soul before earth life, and then asks why we cannot remember it and proceeds to argue that our failure to remember that suppositious life is a proof that we do not survive death

I can accept the idea that Charles Dickens survives without supposing that there was any Charles Dickens before 1812 I can accept the idea that "M" and I may survive death without supposing that we were both alive and both ourselves or ever the morning stars sang together

Spiritualism is not built up of metaphysical speculations It rests on practical evidence A spiritualist believes in survival and communication because he is convinced that he has had communication with the spirits of the dead He does not necessarily profess to know anything about previous incarnations or future immortality But he believes his son is not dead, because he has spoken with him, or has seen him, or has had from him messages no other person could have sent

Our critics ask too much I can believe in the existence of a soul without being able to tell what the soul is made of or how it was made or where it came from I believe in the existence of the sun and the Milky Way, but I don't know their history, nor their future If we know that our dead friends are alive, and that we shall meet

them again, we know enough to satisfy the greediest lover

Another correspondent, "F F S," is helpfully suggestive. He says, "I find it hard indeed to conceive an ego continuing to live after the whole machinery of living has ceased to exist." But the point is that the "machinery" does not do the living—it is life that does the living. When a man is just dead the "machinery" has not ceased to exist, it has only ceased to work." All the "machinery" is there. Nothing has gone but life. Your perfect motor-car will not run when the petrol tank is empty. A man gets a blood-clot on the brain and instantly dies. It is as though a fragment of grit gets into the wheels of a clock and the clock stops.

Now, the clockmaker can remove the grit, and the clock will go. But suppose a clever surgeon could remove the blood clot, would the dead man live? No. All the "machinery" would be intact, but the essential factor would be absent—Life.

If a man's heart misses two beats the man is dead. No atom of the "machinery" has been lost. Nothing has been broken. But something has gone. The man is a corpse. What has gone? Life—life, which set the heart beating, life, which built up the child in the dark, life, which formed the brain and kept it thinking. A man is not a machine. He is something more than a machine. A man can make a machine—he cannot make life. What is life?

Our friend, "F.F.S," cannot conceive of "abstract living," but is not life itself an abstraction?

Life is not material Life is not a part of the "machinery" Life is the mysterious power which works the machinery Life enables the sea gull to hover above a fast steamer Just a few degrees too much frost and the gull can fly no more The bird is dead Warm the body? It is useless, that gull will never fly, will never move again A gull is not a machine When life leaves the bird it cannot be put back

We do not see with the eye we use the eye to see by I see a picture on my wall by means of the eye, just as I see Jupiter's moons by means of a telescope But the eye can no more see than a Kodak camera can see It is the mind that sees What is the mind? It is not material we see abstractly

Professor Alex Erskine, in his book "Hypnotism," says

"The science of hypnotism has destroyed the theory of the materialist for ever It is proved now that the mind is a distinct and separate entity It is dynamic both in matter and force, it is connected with the body and yet can be directed by the will to expand or protect itself, or be outside the body, although closely connected with it"

"It has been proved" The Professor speaks with decision He does not say, "it seems," or "I think" "It is proved" And he gives us evidence

"I placed a youth of sixteen years of age into a trance state of hypnotic sleep, and made him, through suggestion, while in this state follow his father for some hours of the day out of doors, the youth sitting at each five

minutes where his father was and to whom he spoke, whether a man or woman, until his father returned home ”

The youth never left the chair He did not remember following his father The father did not know he was followed Yet the son had told correctly all his father’s movements This case seems to throw some light on that puzzling problem of “ abstract living ” What was it followed the father ? It was not the son’s body It was nothing material All the boy’s “ machinery of living ” remained inert in the chair With what did he follow and see his father ? Can a boy travel and see and remember and think without a body ? It would appear so

“ F F S ” asks how can a man live without a body ? I do not know How can eternity have no end and no beginning ? How can space be boundless ? We know that these things must be, but we cannot conceive them

“ F F S ” has not grasped the essential point of the argument about trivial messages No message which really comes from the dead is trivial If my dead friend only says, “ I live,” that is a message of transcendent importance, if it is true “ F F S ” says “ When I get to the other side I shall hope to rush back, at the earliest, with some of those tremendous truths which a world in darkness is so desperately in need of ” But my reading and my personal experience lead me to think that our friend will not be able to do what he hopes to do My wife was eager to rush back and tell us the tremendous truth that she is alive But it

was more than a year before I heard a word from her and then I did not believe it Why was she silent? She was not silent I was deaf

Now, suppose our friend "FFS" to have awakened on the other side He rushes back He rushes to his home, to his room, where his widow is sleeping She cannot see nor hear him In the daylight he tries again He goes into the club, where a lot of his friends are lunching and talking and laughing, and he realizes that he is like the man in "News from Nowhere," who found that for the happy company around him he had no existence they could not see, nor hear, nor feel him "FFS" will have to wait until he can make a contact Most likely his dearest friends will have no "aerial"

But later, we will hope, he gets through, and he begins to tell those tremendous truths of which the world in its darkness is so desperately in need And the world in its darkness just laughs and goes on eating ices, smoking cigarettes, backing horses, dancing, loving, marrying and making money Who is going to believe all those fairy tales which a parcel of cranks pretend to have received from spooks?

Detailed statements, purporting to be tremendous truths, have come through and have been published There are many volumes of them But the bulk of the readers shrug their shoulders, ask, "How do I know?" or declare that they are unable to conceive abstract living

Another question "What is an exact description?" "He is a man about sixty Five feet five

inches in height, stout, with great chest capacity His face is round and fair, forehead broad and rather low His head is rather bald on the top He has light brown hair, with no sign of grey, a slight moustache, short side whiskers, and aquiline nose, a double chin and pale blue eyes His habitual expression is open and inquiring, with a hint of amusement He is dressed in dark clothes and wears a turn-down collar, cut loosely He has a full throat He died many years ago, of Bright's disease, but he was much troubled by asthma " I should say that description would be exact enough for me to recognize an uncle of mine to whom every word applies But when it is added that he is a very cheerful, chatty man, a good story-teller and a general favourite the identification is complete

Feda's description of my wife was given with the minutest detail, and was aided by the action of her hands, with which she seemed to model the face and head as if she were working a likeness in wet clay And it was very strange that another medium, nearly twenty miles away and some hours later, gave me a description in almost identical words And both mediums said " I cannot see the colour of her eyes, for she is looking down at you " Now when the lady in South Africa, who is clairvoyant, described my wife's eyes, she said " Her eyes are dark I cannot tell whether they are brown or blue " And the fact is her eyes were a kind of kitten grey, *not* dark And yet, unless you looked closely and intently, her grey eyes looked a sparkling black Any old friend of ours would

notice that Her eyes looked dark and sharp, like the eyes of a robin I think the hesitation of the South African lady rather suggestive "They are dark, but I don't know the colour"

Another reader has sent me an argument against human survival He says statisticians estimate that since the evolution of man no less than 280 billions of human beings have died, and he seems to think there will be no room for such a vast number I have heard the same suggestion before Let us see

The great nebula in Orion is estimated to be one thousand "light years" from the earth One thousand "light years" means more than five thousand seven hundred billions of miles

If the 280 billions of humans were formed up "line ahead" between the earth and the nebula there would be an interval of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles between one man and another, with all the unthinkable space of the universe to right and left of them Each man or woman of the 280 billions would have millions of billions of square miles to play about in

Now let us consider the capacity of our own tiny solar system The orbit of Neptune is sixteen thousand, seven hundred and sixty-four millions of miles 280 billions of humans, each six feet tall, would if placed in single line, head to foot, reach 315 millions of miles, which would be one fifty-third of Neptune's orbit It would, therefore, need 53 armies of 280 billions each to form a single line along Neptune's orbit and within that orbit there would be an area five thousand, five hundred and eighty-eight millions of miles in diameter If

a human crossed the diameter of the orbit from one side to the other at a speed of 100 miles an hour the crossing would take him 2,370 years It would need 698,500 globes as large as our earth to bridge the diameter of Neptune's orbit

Ours is a small system with a small sun The known universe is estimated to contain 120 millions of suns

No room ?

PART II

IT will be as well if at this point I explain my change of attitude towards spiritualism. Throughout most of my thinking life I have been a convinced materialist even a militant materialist. I believed that the personality was bound up in the structure of the brain. As I have expressed it more than once, "the brain is the man."

Now, if the brain is the man, when the brain dies the man is dead his personality has ceased to exist. Memory, conscience, intellect and emotion being simply readjustments of the brain cells, it would follow that when after death the brain falls into decay the I and the you cease to be. That is logical, if the personality is confined to the material brain. I believed that to be proved beyond question.

But there were two natural phenomena which baffled me. One was the phenomenon of sight, the other was the mysterious powers of the subliminal consciousness.

As a child I used to worry the grown-ups with a question "What do we see with?" The grown-ups told me all about it. They told me how the light rays entered the pupil of the eye and made a picture on the retina, which picture was conveyed

by the optic nerve to the brain Just like a camera, they said

But I knew that my question had not been answered Because a camera cannot see And I knew that human sight begins where the camera leaves off I can see a picture on the window of the camera, but the camera is blind So I locked my unanswered question up in my mind, where it remained for the best part of a lifetime

I think I have got my question answered at last, as I will show in due course

The action of the subliminal consciousness interested me, but I did not at that time realize its full significance that came later

The first shock to my materialist faith was the sub-division of the atom If the atom, which I had always regarded as the ultimate foundation of matter was neither indivisible nor stable, I could not help feeling that materialism was an unsubstantial theory

If the atoms, billions of which could be contained in an egg shell, could be subdivided, who could say that their component parts could not again be subdivided, and where was this to end? I began to wear a worried look Such volatile matter seemed too thin and slippery to stand on, and I found myself, like Mohammed's coffin, suspended, as it were, 'twixt earth and heaven, with no matter on which to rest my material feet I was uneasy and perplexed

And then a heavy blow fell My wife died

And I found, to my surprise, that I did not believe she was dead I could not feel that she was dead.

that she had ceased to be I could only believe that though her body had ceased to live *she* was alive My daughters, who had shared my materialist convictions, shared my new belief They felt that the sweet and vital personality of their little mother had survived This was not because of the great love which bound them together It was not because of their deep sorrow in their loss It was like the sudden flaming up of a new light As I tried to express it to myself at the time "My position is illogical I find it almost impossible to believe in human survival of death and quite impossible to believe my wife is dead "

What, I asked myself, is life? Neither physiology nor chemistry can tell us A young soldier-poet, brave, cheerful, intellectual, of strong vitality and winning kindness, is hit by a stray bullet, and falls dead He dies because his heart ceases to act A minute ago he was alive, he was our joyous, witty, kindly comrade Now he is not with us, that body lying there motionless and silent is not our friend, that human shape is incapable of sight, or speech, or emotion What has become of the man we knew and loved? Something is gone

The change from life to death has always held me with its mystery

When Shakespeare lay dead he was no longer Shakespeare Every material atom which was a part of him in life remained to his corpse But *he* was not there That mysterious something which loved and longed and sorrowed and rejoiced had evaporated. There was the brain with all its

rearranged cells, but not the mind which made a world of its own and peopled it with women and men of its own creation

When "two thousand pounds of education drop to a ten rupee jezail," has the gallant soul become the helpless prey of an unwashed, barbarian sniper? Did a clumsy musket-ball annihilate Nelson? It was on the King of Denmark's body, surely, not upon his soul, that his brother's "damned defeat" was made.

More than thirty years ago my mother died of syncope. I was present when she ceased to breathe and lay still. She was dead. Her body lay before me. But she was not there. All the matter which composed her was there, but not herself. Her personality was gone. The body was my mother's body, but it was not my mother. It was no more my mother than my hat is my head. She had lost not an atom of material substance, yet she was changed from a woman to a corpse. The woman who laughed, who thought, who willed, who loved, who remembered, had become a lifeless body.

The materialist would explain that her organs had ceased to function. He would say that thought and speech, humour and imagination, compassion and affection, memory and reason are reflex actions of matter, like the rain and the tides. Well, I felt when my wife died that I could not disprove his theory, but I no longer believed it. It did not suffice for my human need. I asked myself, "Who was she whose organs used to function?" and I felt that the personality which

was herself was as real as her flesh and bone, and probably more permanent

Having arrived at this pass I decided to study the books of better informed men and to reconsider my position. The old Adam was still strong within me. I was not content to feel. I wanted to *know*.

The first ray of light came to me when I was reading "Death and its Mystery." M. Flammarion says it is not the brain which sees "it is the soul that sees and uses the brain as the instrument." So far, so good. We postulate a soul, and that was more than I was equal to at the time.

But later I read a lecture, by Mr. Alex. Erskine, who is a Professor of Neurology, and I began to get a better grasp of the idea. Mr. Erskine's words carry conviction, because he acts up to the rhymed instruction of Mr. Squeers "When he knows it he goes and does it." In other words, this great nerve doctor puts his theory to the test of practice, he tells us that the mind controls the body, and he proves it by causing the minds of his patients to cure their ills.

To begin with, let us see what the professor says about the sight. He tells us how the light comes through the pupil and makes a picture on the retina, and how the optic nerve is caused to vibrate by the light, and how the vibration is carried "by electric process up to the terminal of the optic nerve centre in the brain." All that we already knew. But this we did not know. "In other words, it *rings*, as it were, the bell in the brain that instantly attracts the mind's attention and in-

telligence, which interprets and sees the object reflected on the retina." Then comes the vital sentence "So we understand scientifically now that the mind is a separate entity, which has power to see."

When in a state of waking consciousness, the mind can only see through the agency of the eye. But in the sleep of hypnosis the mind can see without the agency of the eye.

That the mind does under normal conditions see without the eye, Mr Erskine says, is proved by absolute fact, and he mentions the cases of somnambulists who when asleep have written letters, have first found the necessary material though their eyes were shut and their normal consciousness was asleep.

Mr Erskine is not a metaphysical theorist. He is a practical medical man and a man of science, and he tells us in his lecture in the plainest words. "Mind created the organism of the body and can restore the body under certain conditions, apart from all so-called drugs, and we must allow this, in spite of all controversy, by proven and established facts, even at the present day."

"The mind created the organism of the body." That is what Professor Hudson claims in his great book, "The Divine Pedigree of Man." Hudson argues that the unicellular animal, or moneron, had a mind, and that mind existed before brain.

"The second proposition which I desire my readers to bear in mind is that this mental organism began its earthly career millions of years before a brain was evolved in the process of organic evolution. In fact, according to

the best authorities, the archilithic period, or primordial epoch, which was the age of skull-less animals, consumed considerably more than one-half of all the years that have elapsed since the advent of organic life on our planet ”

In the sixteenth century Spenser wrote

“ For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make ”

But Professor Hudson is arguing with us, Mr Erskine is telling us Professor Hudson reasons, Mr Erskine knows Mr Erskine has proved the mastery of mind over the body by practical experiment The subconscious part of the mind controls all reflex action, as the operations of the nerves and the movement of the heart, the lungs and the blood When there is anything amiss, the neurologist gets the brain asleep and asks the mind to put the wrong right The brain is the organ of question and of doubt , the mind, in its subconscious state, believes and obeys

Here is 'an account of a case given to an interviewer

“ A man who had been blind since the battle of the Marne was cured by me, not by any ‘ miracle,’ but because he had only lost the *use* of his sight His eyeballs had been displaced in the socket , and his conscious mind was unable to compel the subconscious mind to rectify the damage I put him into a hypnotic trance and told him to lower his eyeballs He did so at once, and has been able to see ever since ”

According to both Prof Hudson and Prof Erskine the mind evolved the body, and the mind controls the body And it is very interesting and wonderful to realize that the brain, because it is

ignorant of the powers of the mind, does not appeal to those powers unless as the result of instruction and proof from such physicians as the neurologists. The brain cannot interfere with the course of the blood, nor mend an injured nerve, nor clear a congested gland. But the mind can, for the mind is what M. Flammarion calls the soul.

If the brain is not the mind the brain is not the man. Here Prof. J. Arthur Thomson shows a light. He says:

"The solid earth has become very tenuous and matter very ethereal, while the ether of bygone days has lost its material existence. But there is a deeper invisibility than we have spoken of namely the invisibility of the 'imponderables,' which are the most powerful agencies on earth. We mean, of course, thoughts and feelings, and the bent bow of purpose, which though thirled to brain and body, belong to a different dimension from these."

That mysterious entity of which Prof. Erskine speaks as the mind appears to use the brain as an instrument. Those brain cells are not you, they are the tools you need in this brief life to work with. This becomes evident when we begin to study the operations of the subliminal consciousness, for it appears to be true "beyond a peradventure," as President Wilson would have said, that the subself can and does think and feel and act without the brain. That being so, there remains no validity in the claim that the brain is the man.

Nor is there any reason that I can discern why a self which can act and think without the brain could not survive and live without the brain.

taking with it into another life the personality it had owned upon the earth Memory, conscience, emotion, and intuition appear to be attributes of the subliminal consciousness, and I am not aware that any evidence has been given that the subliminal consciousness is mortal, like the brain

Here we must be cautious We do not know the nature nor the seat of the subliminal consciousness Is it a material organ like the brain? Is it, perchance, the second lobe of the brain, the dark side of the human moon? The sub-mind has not been located, many of its most marvellous manifestations are more or less in dispute

Professor Erskine tells us that we have not two minds, but one mind Sometimes the mind acts through the brain, but sometimes it acts, as it were, "on its own" To me it seems in accordance with the known facts to conclude that the so-called sub-self is the soul, that is the real self and the only self, and that the brain is a machine it employs for (some, but not all) its earthly business.

The subliminal consciousness, which I shall call the sub-mind, is like a self within oneself It is that part of our mind, or self, which works independently of our consciousness and will.

It was the late F W H Myers who first made the sub-mind manifest to the public, though many thoughtful persons had been conscious of its presence and power without giving it a name I myself always thought of it as "the fellow in the cellarage" Myers, in "Human Personality," thus describes it

"The 'conscious self,' of each of us, as we call it—the

empirical, the supraliminal self, as I should prefer to say—does not comprise the whole of the consciousness or of the faculty within us. There exists a more comprehensive consciousness, a profounder faculty, which, for the most part, remains potential only, so far as regards the life of earth, but from which the consciousness and the faculty of earth life are mere selections.

' And I conceive also that no self of which we can have cognisance is in reality more than a fragment of a larger self, revealed in a fashion at once shifting and limited through an organism not so framed as to afford it full manifestation.'

The operations of the sub-mind are full of suggestiveness. It seemed to me on consideration that the powers of the sub-mind disprove the contention that "the brain is the man."

The sub-mind is complex and mysterious. It never sleeps, it never rests, and it never forgets. From the moment of birth to the moment of death the sub-mind works and watches and remembers. It is rather awful and ghostly in some of its aspects. Its powers are marvellous in their variety and scope.

What is the subliminal consciousness? Where is it? How does it operate? How does it happen that it is awake and active while the brain is asleep? The brain needs sleep in order to recuperate. Apparently the sub-mind does not need recuperation. That surely suggests that it is not composed of brain matter. Of what, then, can it be composed? Memory is supposed to be stored in the brain cells. But the subconsciousness, which remembers everything and never forgets, either has no brain cells or has brain cells which

never tire, never wear out, and never need rest or renovation

The sub-mind sees without eyes and thinks without words Oh ! wonderful fellow in the cellarage, who or what are you ?

I think I have said before that the sub-division of the atom gave the first shock to my materialism, but I did not for some time devote much thought to the problem It was some years later, when I began to investigate spiritualism, that I first looked up modern theories of energy and matter What is matter ? I asked myself, and is the mind material ? The answers surprised me

Professor J Arthur Thomson, in his admirable "Introduction and Science," quotes Huxley

" My fundamental axiom of speculative philosophy is that materialism and spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity—the absurdity of imagining that we know anything about either spirit or matter "

In the same book Professor Thomson quotes Lord Kelvin

" The only contribution of dynamics to theoretical biology is absolute negation of automatic commencement or automatic maintenance of life The opening of a bud, the growth of a leaf, the astonishing development of beauty in a flower, involve physical operations which completed chemical science would leave as far beyond our comprehension as the differences between lead and iron, between water and carbonic acid, between gravitation and magnetism, are at present "

Professor Thomson evidently endorses the opinion of Lord Kelvin, for he says

" In regard to ' the soul and body ' problem, and also

in regard to 'the secret of the organism,' some reader may be inclined to press the following question. This discussion of 'the unity of the organism' and 'the autonomy of the organism' is all very well, but do you mean that there is in the living creature more than matter and energy, or not? To this and similar questions the scientific answer must be that the question is not rightly put. We do not know what matter really is, nor what all the energies of matter may be. What we do know is that physico chemical formulæ do not make the living creature intelligible, and that we have no warrant for asserting that the physical concept of 'matter' and 'energy,' abstracted off for special scientific purposes, exhaust the reality of nature."

And on another page, the Professor, speaking of matter and energy, says "We may well say of them what Hobbes said of words 'They are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them, but they are the money of fools'"

Professor B. Moore, in "The Origin and Nature of Life," says

"The fundamental mystery lies in the existence of those entities, or things, which we call matter and energy, and in the existence of the natural laws which correlate them and cause all those things to happen which the natural philosopher observes and classifies and correlates, but cannot explain in one single instant."

Professor Flammarion, in his "Uranie," says

"What we call matter vanishes just as scientific analysis is about to grasp it. We find force is the dynamic element, the mainstay of the universe, and the essential principle behind all forms. The human being has the soul as its essential principle. The universe is an intelligent principle that we cannot understand."

While in the first volume of M. Flammarion's

"Death and its Mystery," we find this "In natural history, botany, animal physiology, anthropology, one element may be observed that is distinct from matter and movement—that is *life*."

In "Life and Matter," Sir Oliver Lodge says

"It now appears that an atom may break up into electric charges, and these again may some day be found capable of resolving themselves into pristine ether. If so, then these also are temporary, and in the material universe it is the ether only which persists—the ether with such states of motion-strain as it eternally possesses—in which case the ether will have proved itself the material substratum and most fundamental known entity on that side."

When I read that I could not help remarking that a "matter" which breaks up into electrical charges and then resolves into pristine ether, seems to be guilty of conduct unbecoming a material entity. My idea of matter is something that will "stay put." In my perplexity I consulted Professor Moore and found him equally disquieting. He says

"Even now he stands on the verge of the discovery that all his elements are derived from one form of stuff only, which may not be matter itself, but when tenanted by something which he has recognized and named as energy becomes converted into forms of matter leading up to those elements which he first unearthed."

And on another page he emphasizes the statements in the following passage,

"If these things happen the view becomes opened that by energy discharge the most primal matter may possibly be thrown into something which is not matter, in the usual sense of the word, and lacks those criteria by which we

appreciate matter, and if this be possible, then by attaching energy to this precursor of matter it becomes possible to create matter. Thus the position is arrived at that instead of matter and energy being fixed in amount and always conserved they are mutually convertible into each other, as soon as we have discovered the appropriate mechanism for the purpose."

Matter then would appear to be a very slippery and unsubstantial concept upon which to build any kind of solid theory. But my own feeling about it is very clearly and forcibly expressed by M Flammarion, in Vol III of "Death and its Mystery"

"And, as a matter of fact (let us ask it again), what is matter really? The difference between a block of ice and a cloud is only a difference in their state, the nature of them is not dissimilar. The word *matter* is but a word. An analysis of what matter really consists of makes it take on, to-day, fantastically intricate aspects. It would appear, from rigorous calculations and extremely precise experiments, that a milligram of radium contains two million billion of atoms! What can the size of an atom be? The atom, in turn, is revealed as a world in itself, a system of forces. May not an 'immortal' soul be an atomic world? Matter and energy become one. This is what Pythagoras said. The visible universe is composed of invisible elements."

Pythagoras said "Everywhere in the world matter and spirit are in principle identical"

Early in 1922 I began a study of Psychic Science. My idea was to read up the subject of spiritualism before I attempted any personal investigations. On the 18th of May, 1922, my daughter received a letter from a friend of hers in Southampton, containing the following

"Many thanks for yours last week, and I don't want you to bother to answer this letter, it is just a statement, that both Mr L and I feel should be given you"

"Quite unexpectedly at the last minute Mr L and I had sittings with Mr Evan Powell at the Church. After about half an hour's physical manifestations I heard my name called three times by what we call the direct voice. I said, 'Yes who is it?' and all near heard the voice say 'Mrs Blatchford,' and then after a slight pause 'Tell Robert.' I asked for more conclusive evidence, but got nothing more. Mr L said it was a clear-cut voice, but I am unable to say more than that I heard the words distinctly. Helen wished I had asked the control for description of the spirit manifesting, but I did not think of it at the time. The control did say 'This is the first time this lady has manifested.' Mr Powell was in a deep trance at the time and appears to know nothing [of] what has transpired."

The writer of the letter from which the above is quoted had not met my wife and was unable to identify the voice. I did not give much thought to the incident, as my wife never spoke to me or of me as Robert. But there was a sequel later. On the 1st of June, 1924, at my second sitting with Mrs Leonard, Feda, the control, said, "Your lady says she did speak at Southampton with the direct voice, but she did not stop in the room as she did not like the influence of Munnings."

I did not know who or what Munnings was, and my daughter wrote to her friend Mrs L at Southampton, and got the answer that Munnings was a medium who visited Southampton "soon after the war," was subsequently detected as a fraud and had since been convicted of burglary.

I got no other message in the year 1922, but I received a letter which led to some curious

developments I had written some articles in the "Sunday Chronicle" on spiritualism and spiritualists, and Mr T A R Purchas, President of the Rand Water Board, at Johannesburg, wrote to me about his thirty-five years' experience and told me some of the remarkable messages his circle had received and how they had put several South African soldiers, killed in France, into communication with their relatives I was deeply interested and I said in my reply to the letter that if the Johannesburg circle could find a dead son in France they might be able to find a dead wife in England I told Mr Purchas that my wife died on the 19th December, 1921, and said I should be very grateful if they could get news of her

At the first meeting of the circle after my request arrived, Mr Purchas asked the spirit guide to inquire for my wife That sitting was held on the 10th of January, 1923 Two weeks later, at the sitting on January 24th, 1923, the spirit guide introduced two ladies, one of whom he said was Mrs Blatchford I will quote from the detailed report which Mr Purchas kindly sent me on the day following But first I had better explain that the circle consisted of personal friends There was no professional medium present Mrs Purchas, who acts as medium, is clairvoyant and clairaudient She sees and hears the spirits and all written messages are given automatically through her hand

"The next moment Mrs Purchas intimated to the Circle that strangers were present—two elderly ladies

'Mrs Purchas, addressing the visitors—' I don't know

either of you Have you a message you wish to get through? Can you write it? If there is any difficulty you will be able to get someone to write it for you Am I to understand that one of you is Mrs Blatchford?"

"Having received satisfactory replies to her questions—in a manner not appreciable by the rest of us, presumably by clairaudience, Mrs Purchas then proceeded to describe to the members of the Circle the personal appearance of the two visitors

"One is small, the other tall, quite tall by comparison They are both, apparently, about the same age between sixty and seventy, I should judge Both are somewhat thin The smaller and shorter one has grey hair I should say it had been dark, if not black Her eyes are dark I cannot see whether they are brown or blue Her complexion is pale, almost sallow She is dressed in dark material, but there is nothing distinctive in the dress, so far as I can see Her companion is certainly tall, thin, almost inclined to gauntness She has evidently been a fair woman, but with age the hair has passed into an indeterminate grey and the complexion has become what I must call faded Her dress is old-fashioned, mid-Victorian, I imagine She is wearing a close-fitting dark bonnet and a Shetland-wool shawl is drawn round her shoulders I am given to understand she is a relative of the little lady and that her name is Margaret I have asked for her surname, but am told the Christian name will be sufficient for identification The impression I get is that the little lady is Mrs Blatchford"

There was nothing very evidential in that description, nor in the message given through the hand of Mrs Purchas But I will here note one suggestive fact No one in the South African Circle knew that my wife was a little woman Yet on this and subsequent occasions the spirit guide and the soldier, George Fisher, who helped her, invariably spoke of her as "the little lady."

Now many of my wife's intimate friends habitually spoke of her as "the little lady" or "the little mother". That is a comparatively trivial coincidence, but an accumulation of such suggestive trifles has a strong evidential value. Also, although no conclusive evidence came through the South African Circle until November of 1923, yet this connection with South Africa proved of considerable value in the sequel.

Some time in the spring of 1923 Mr and Mrs Hewat McKenzie, of the British College of Psychical Science, came to see me, and Mr McKenzie promised to arrange for a sitting with Mrs Osborne Leonard, whom he described as perhaps the best living medium. This sitting was finally fixed for Sunday, the 23rd of September, 1923, at 11.30 a.m.

I was introduced as Mr Roberts. Mr Leonard and Mr McKenzie went for a motor ride, and Mrs Leonard and I were left alone in the house. The room was an average suburban parlour, with a long bay window looking on the road, and a door opening into the hall. Mrs Leonard drew the thick window curtains and we sat down. The position of our chairs was such that Mrs Leonard faced north and I faced south-east. I was about a yard distance, on her left front. I could have touched her with my hand. The room was not in complete darkness. After a few minutes I could have read a book or written a letter, the features of the medium were clearly visible.

I was deeply interested, but not at all excited. I was watchful, rather sceptical, but not hostile. I had an open mind, but was not in a credulous

mood While Mrs Leonard was quietly going to sleep I was asking myself "Is this a trance, or sleep? Why should she go to sleep?" But I liked the lady She looked tranquil and good My mental attitude can be gathered from something I wrote to an old friend in Manchester, four days prior to the sitting "I go to London on Sunday to see the medium I'll let you know what happens I have little faith I don't at all expect to get any solid evidence, but I have promised to go" That does not suggest emotional credulity

Before I go any farther I will mention some curious acoustic facts Feda, the control, spoke with the medium's lips, but the voice did not come from the medium When Feda first arrived her voice, speaking rapidly and indistinctly, approached us from the door and seemed to pass over Mrs Leonard's right shoulder After that Feda's voice came from my left, as though she had been standing about four feet directly in front of Mrs Leonard I did not notice this at first, but after awhile it struck me as queer that when I spoke to Feda I turned away from Mrs Leonard And when my wife spoke to me with the direct voice she seemed to speak from a point between the medium and the control There is no doubt in my mind as to these facts On my second visit, Feda spoke from the same place, and I turned instinctively to speak to her Now, it is obvious that if the voice had come from Mrs Leonard I should not have turned away from her to ask or answer a question The impression I got from

the beginning was that Feda was a distinct personality in no way resembling Mrs Leonard This, as the lawyers say, "without prejudice"

Feda, speaking in a light treble voice, with a foreign accent and quite un-British freedom of gesticulation, came directly to business "There is a lady here wishes to speak with you She calls you by a name beginning with B the short name, not the long one" And I was "Mr Roberts" Still I thought perhaps the medium knew or guessed my identity

Feda went on to say "She is glad you come to-day as it is the anniversary of a very happy time you spent together It was a long time ago and in a place far away You have a photograph taken of you then, but it is put away She wants you to unearth it"

I thought the photograph would be one taken in the Isle of Wight in 1887, but I found out later that it was taken by a friend at Bruges in 1908 My wife had greatly enjoyed that holiday

Feda's next shot made me open my eyes "She is trying to put her hand in your breast pocket She say she is pleased you have that in your pocket, but the little one is gone a very long way" I had a pocket wallet in which I carry two of my wife's portraits One is a carte size and was taken just before our wedding, the other was a small snapshot taken in 1915 The small one was not in my pocket on the day I met Feda It was in South Africa

Telepathy? Well, it might be, though I don't believe it for a moment, but I will now select from

this first sitting some of the more evidential messages

Shortly before my wife died my daughter bought her a pair of pretty shoes. She liked the shoes very much and they were kept in a drawer of the dressing table of her room. In the course of the sitting Feda said "She is pleased you keep her things, but she ask why did you give away her new shoes?" I said "No, Feda, we have not given them away." Feda answered "She say she cannot see them." Half an hour later Feda said "Now she has come back to the shoes again. She say you don't know they have been given away, but they have." I promised to inquire. On my return home I found that these shoes, which used to be kept in her room, had been put into a chest of drawers in my room, while all her other shoes were in my wardrobe.

A trifling matter? Yes, but interesting. The shoes had been moved, but I did not know. Therefore Feda could not have found out by telepathy. Moreover Feda, or my wife, thought the shoes were given away, which was not the fact. Now it would be natural for my wife, if she missed the shoes, to mention them, for she valued them, but why should a medium, or a control, trouble about them? If my wife comes frequently to our house, as Feda said, and knew that those special shoes were not in the place where she left them, nor with her other shoes, that would account for the question from her. But how can we account for such a question from the medium? And my wife said (I put it so for the sake of brevity, though,

of course, it was Feda who told what she said), "I am telling you all these trivial things so that you will know I visit your home"

My wife asked (through Feda), "Why did you move the bed?" That was a feather-bed she slept on I answered that it was taken out to be aired but had been put back Did the medium read in my mind that the bed had been moved? Then why did she not read in my mind that it had been put back? My wife might miss the bed and not know it had been replaced But if the medium could read all that was in my mind she would read there the knowledge that the bed had been returned to the room

Feda Your lady say "Tell the girls they have used some of her handkerchiefs and they are to use those that were given to her They are in a box"

I did not know about those handkerchiefs, but we found them How did Feda know about them?

Feda She say "Tell the girls not to worry about the blue plate It was a pure accident They are worried Tell them it does not matter"

I knew an old plate had been broken, but I did not know it was blue nor that the girls were worrying about it How did Feda know?

Feda She say "I like the garden You have improved it You have improved the rooms too But ask the girls why they did not do the ceiling"

Neither I nor the girls understood about the ceiling But I went over the house and found an attic ceiling partially collapsed How did Feda know?

Feda She say " That enlarged photograph is pretty good, but not as good as the original Some of the background has been taken out and the shading on the left side of the face is too weak "

We had sent a cabinet photograph of my wife to be enlarged We had noticed the weakened shading on the left side of the face, but not the change in the background But it was found to be as Feda said How did Feda know ?

Feda was speaking about a girl when she stopped suddenly and then said quickly " A—las, a—las ! Is that a joke ? " Then I heard a whisper and Feda called out " Oh, she say where she come from a boy and a girl are a lad and a lass "

Of course I knew what the word lass meant, but how was it Feda did not know ?

So with the dog —

Feda She is saying " Ally, ally, ally " What is that ? She is smiling Is it another joke ? Ah ! Now she say it is a dog

Feda's telepathy was at fault We had a dog in Norfolk and when we shouted to him " Allez ! Allez ! Allez ! " he used to run round and round in rings, like a horse in a circus Feda did not read that in my mind She had to be told

Telepathy is the sceptic's trump card With that he expects to turn every trick But telepathy does not explain all that Feda said I do not believe telepathy can enable a medium to read what is in my mind

Be that as it may, telepathy will not read in my mind knowledge which is not there Feda told

me four things I did not know She told me some handkerchiefs were in a drawer, that a broken plate was blue, that a ceiling needed repair, and that the background of a photograph had been tampered with She did not get those facts from me Where, how, and from whom did she get them ?

Feda failed to read some things in my mind which I did know She did not know about the dog until she was told Who told her ?

Feda did not know that a lass is a girl until she was told Who told her ? When I put a question through her to my wife, about a person whose name might be masculine or feminine, Feda thought the person was a woman, but then she said, quickly, " Oh, it is a he and not a her " Who told her ?

We see then that in four cases telepathy knew too much and in three cases too little Telepathy does not cover all the facts

And telepathy has no bearing on the fact that my wife spoke to me with the direct voice Feda had just given me a description of an uncle of mine who died more than thirty years ago and had paused after saying he was quite happy and well, when I got the surprise of the day

Away from the medium and away from me my wife spoke directly to me She said, in an eager, anxious tone " Bob, I'm here I am with you, Bob " Before I could recover my presence of mind Feda began to speak again and I lost the chance to reply But it was my wife's voice I heard and she pronounced the word Bob as she always did when with us I think it is a sug-

gestive fact that she spoke my name twice I had always said that if I heard a medium utter my name in that way I should think the evidence important

But when I related that incident in the "Sunday Chronicle," several readers suggested that I had imagined I heard the voice, and amongst these was Bishop Welldon. But my wife had been dead nearly two years, and I had never imagined I heard her speak until I sat with Mrs Leonard. And at that sitting my wife told me through Feda how she had tried to let me know of her presence in our home.

One night she woke me up, she said. I remember the night I woke suddenly with a feeling that she was there. I switched on the light, sighed, said "Dreaming," and went to sleep again.

Another night she said she entered the room at my side and she thought I knew that time I remember the occasion. I felt her presence, and I switched on the light, smiled at my folly, and said, "Imagination." That does not look like credulity. But is it not possible to be too incredulous?

I did not imagine I heard my wife's voice. I was not expecting it. It is unusual for a spirit to break in with the direct voice and without the help or knowledge of medium or control. So little did I imagine the voice and the words that they startled me. They startled me so much that I had not the presence of mind to give a direct answer.

Bishop Welldon thinks my imagination played me a trick Did I imagine Feda?

Bishop Welldon suggests that my keen desire to believe that my wife is alive and my eagerness for news of her account in some way, not specified, for my belief that I had heard her speak and my acceptance of the evidence as evidential I have already dealt with that suggestion, and I now wish respectfully to point out that Bishop Welldon's theory does not explain Feda

If Feda is not a spirit, what is she? A clever impersonation of Mrs Leonard's? Is that the explanation? I cannot accept it I cannot believe that any observant person who ever sat with Mrs Leonard will accept it

I would warn the reader against the mistake of regarding my experience of that day as an isolated experience

Mine was not the only sitting ever held with a medium I am not the first man to be granted evidence of survival In hundreds of thousands of cases women and men have had psychic experiences much more remarkable and convincing than mine

Mrs Leonard did not give me the first sitting in her career She is a famous medium, well known to all the leading spiritualists She has sat with many eminent men and women She has been a successful medium for years, and has won the confidence and respect of hundreds But of that more anon

Feda is not a tricksy sprite, invented specially for my edification She is a thoroughly well-

known control, whose powers have been tested again and again These facts must be kept in mind by those who would criticize my account of the manifestations I witnessed on September 23

Consulting Part LXXVIII of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, I find an account of a series of sittings with Mrs Leonard, by Miss Radclyffe-Hall and Lady Troubridge, in the year 1916 At the first sittings Feda gave evidence similar in kind to that she gave me She described "the White Cottage at Malvern Wells, together with a description of characteristic features of the neighbourhood and references to the neighbours "

Miss Radclyffe-Hall was taking no risks She sent a detective to Malvern Wells to find out whether anyone had been asking questions about the place or people mentioned by Feda She also took steps to discover whether any person had got permission to enter and view the White Cottage

The detective also made inquiries about Mrs Leonard in London The detective found nothing But still the ladies were not fully satisfied, and they went personally to Malvern Wells and made inquiries themselves The result was that they were both convinced of Mrs Leonard's *bona fides*

Now, as to Feda, Miss Radclyffe-Hall says "Our thanks are due to Feda for the full and accurate records which we have been able to obtain She has always shown the greatest solicitude on this point, repeating slowly and carefully, more than once, anything intricate that appeared

to her to be of evidential value The above have been our experience, possibly we have been particularly fortunate, owing perhaps to the fact that a very real mutual liking has grown up between ourselves and Feda This, we have been given to understand, is not invariably the case"

Like Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall, I have taken a liking to Feda, and I would like to know what Bishop Welldon proposes to do about her I suppose it would be *infra dig*, for a bishop to—still, I feel that if Bishop Welldon met Feda he would be impressed by her personality I think if he heard her say, "Wait a minute," in her quick impulsive way, he would realize that she is not a myth, nor an impersonation of the medium's I think, also, that he would perceive instinctively that Mrs Leonard is a lady

And, see how things hang together If Mrs Leonard is a lady, Feda is a spirit, or, if Feda is a spirit, Mrs Leonard is a lady In either case there would be no occasion for thought-reading, and the claims of the spiritualists would be established

It was on the 23rd of September, 1923, when my wife spoke to me On the 1st of June, 1924, at my second sitting, I asked Feda if my wife really had spoken to me, or if I had imagined it Feda said "She spoke to you It is a thing that does not happen in hundreds of sittings with me There was a lot of power She seized the power, very quickly She is a little one but she has a will of her own, and she is quick and brave" That is what Feda said She was right about the

strong will, the quickness and the daring. But please notice that she says there was a lot of power at that time.

Now, Miss Estelle Stead wrote to me just after that first sitting, and told me she had just got a message from her father, the late W T Stead. The letter contained this passage:

"My father, whom you knew when here, wishes me to tell you how pleased he is and that many have helped your wife, whom they admire and love, for her own sake and for yours, because your words will bear great weight with many."

"Many helped your wife!" "There was great power that day!"

Sir Oliver Lodge, commenting on the incident in an article he wrote for the "Sunday Chronicle," said

"Mr Blatchford has been favoured with what we call 'a good sitting.' People usually are favoured in like manner when they go with sensible, calm, prepared minds, and when their lost ones are sufficiently eager to come and sufficiently intelligent and persevering and energetic to bethink themselves beforehand of evidential items and to get them transmitted in spite of difficulties."

"Communication of this one-sided kind cannot be easy, for by the rules of the game the sitter is debarred from giving assistance, he has to be passive and receptive, and intelligent, too—he must not turn down as nonsense anything that at the moment he does not understand, for that may afterwards turn out to be among the best pieces of information."

"Mr Blatchford's experience has been even better, in a few particulars, than that vouchsafed to the majority. Something like a cross-correspondence between different and unknown mediums has been established by means of the South African episode, and this was well calculated

to prepare his mind for recognition of the personal and intimate presence of the loved one when the desired opportunity was really given

"Moreover, it is clear that Mrs Blatchford must have been an exceptionally gifted communicator, in order, even momentarily at this first sitting, to make a 'direct voice' audible. With some mediums this can be done more easily than with others, but with the one visited by Mr Blatchford a phenomenon of that kind is rare. Most people have to be satisfied with messages transmitted through the habitual control, Feda, as if through a telephone operator. Actual control of the instrument is seldom achieved by a new and necessarily inexperienced communicator. It can only have been by special and determined effort that this clinging demonstration was accomplished."

These communications convey the spiritualist opinion. My wife was alert and quick and resolute and brave. She was almost desperate in her desire to convince me she is alive, and there were many helping her, amongst them two from South Africa, and there was "great power". The reader must choose between the two theories. I may add, for information, that I never have imagined that I heard, or saw anything, and that so far from my being in a mood to imagine a voice on that occasion, I was taken quite by surprise. I was not expecting what came. I had been told that those things did not happen at sittings with Mrs Leonard.

Neither credulity nor imagination will cover all the facts. Let us return to the theory of telepathy. Mrs Leonard must have read in my mind that my real name is Robert Blatchford, that I am a widower, that I have daughters, and that my wife and I spoke of them as "the girls".

She must have read in my mind that we had got an enlargement of my wife's photograph, and that it was imperfect, and that ten years ago we had a dog which used to run round and round when we called "Allez," and that the dog was dead, and that I have a photograph of him in my study

She must have read the forgotten date of a holiday fifteen years ago, and that I had a photograph taken then, and that it was put away She must have seen in my mind my wife's face as plainly as in a portrait, and must have read there her character as plainly as she saw her face

She must have read that my wife called me Bob, and must have heard that she pronounced the name in a peculiar way She must have heard my wife's voice in my mind so clearly that I did not detect the imitation

She must have found in my mind the full details of my wife's two years' illness and her death She must have read that we keep fresh flowers by my wife's photographs, and that I habitually speak to her when I go to bed As Feda put it, "She say you speak with her at night, not only in your thoughts, but aloud" She must have read in my mind about my daughter's health, about our backs needing repair, and about our family joke

She must have seen in my mind pictures of my uncle and Mr Edward Francis Fay and read there a correct estimate of their characters and history of their decease

She must have read in my mind that I do not often get near to my wife in dreams, for Feda

said "She is not satisfied about your dreams
She is trying to influence you so that when you
wake in the morning you will remember having
been with her in the night"

I do not believe the medium was reading my
thought during that sitting It seems more reason-
able to suppose that my wife was appealing to
my memory

South African messages, purporting to come
from my wife, said she was unhappy because she
could not influence me to believe I suggest that
she tried to get through at Southampton, that she
tried again at Johannesburg, that she broke in
with the direct voice in London, because she feared
the other messages might not convince me There
was a note of appeal in her voice when she spoke
to me

The messages were characteristic of a woman
and a wife They dealt with domestic matters
I was not thinking of furniture, or handkerchiefs,
or shoes, or ceilings She was house-proud, and
loved what she called her "things," and it was
characteristic of her to say she was pleased the
girls kept the house so nice, and that she was
pleased we kept her things just as she liked them
Who but a wife would ask why a bed had been
moved, and why we had not mended the ceiling?

I suggest that, as she said, she spoke of such
things as would convince me that she had been
with us since her death, and that she appealed
to my memory for evidence of her identity

I suggest that the theory that my wife was
present with Mrs Leonard and me and that she

was trying to convince me of her presence is a theory that covers all the facts and that it is the only theory that does cover all the facts

When I put a question to my wife through Feda about a domestic worry, Feda said, "Ah, now you have given her pain. She was smiling. Now she looks grave." Then Feda repeated to me my wife's advice. Now, I had feared that my wife would not approve of the course I had adopted, but she did approve. So that Feda could not have got her approval from my mind. Where did she get it?

That Feda is—a spirit and that my wife was present and spoke to me is the only solution which explains everything that was said.

I admit that such an experience and such a conclusion must seem incredible to a sceptic. They seem incredible to me. So old-established and so deep-seated is my doubt that I still find myself much in the same frame of mind as the American who saw the giraffe and said, "I don't believe it." I ask myself sometimes. "Did these things really happen to me? Did I dream it all? Is it possible that my wife is alive, that she visits us, that I shall meet her and marry her again?"

When I fall into that dubious frame of mind I am glad that I began my investigations without haste by reading all the best books on spiritualism, and weighing the evidence of thousands of good women and good men.

I find in that evidence to-day strength and encouragement for my new hope. After reading

the evidence I was puzzled, but not convinced. But since I have had personal experience my readings have acquired a new meaning, and a new value. They cheer me when I hesitate and support me when I fail.

I have read also much criticism of spiritualism, and a great deal of censure and ridicule of its votaries. And in all that I have read I have never found a solution of all the problems nor an answer to all the evidence.

On the 19th of November, 1923, at a sitting of the Johannesburg circle, a message, purporting to come from my wife, was written automatically by Mrs Purchas. I quote the message in full as reported by Mr Purchas, and with it his note appended.

"Will you tell *Bob* that I am now very happy, as he is of my faith? Strange that it should have taken your South African Circle to tell my dear husband that I am alive. We are most grateful. No, I will not sign yet—can't have everything at once."

Note—I have underlined the word above because it was written exactly as transcribed here. Whether or not that was done to convey an inflexion known to you, but unknown to us, I cannot, of course, say.—T A R Purchas

My wife always pronounced my name as spelt in the above message. But it was quite impossible for anyone in the circle to know that. How, then, did the word Bob come to be written Barb?

At the sitting with Mrs Leonard on the 23rd of September, 1923, when my wife spoke directly to me she pronounced my name Barb, and she

used the name twice as if on purpose to convince me of her identity "Barb, I'm here I am with you, Barb"

Now one would suppose that Feda heard my wife speak to me Yet, on the 1st of June, 1924, Feda repeatedly addressed me as "Mr Bob" She had not picked up the inflexion How, then, did the inflexion get into an automatic message given at a distance of 7,000 miles to a group of sitters not one of whom had ever heard my wife speak?

My wife's refusal to sign her name is peculiar, but not uncommon I am hoping that she will soon sign as it would be good evidence, since no member of the South African Circle knows her Christian name, or the diminutive by which I generally addressed her Someone, I expect, will say that the refusal of the name is suspicious and suggests that the medium failed to guess it But such an objection loses much of its force when it is remembered that this circle got the full names of several African soldiers killed in France and got moreover, the peculiar personal inflexion of my own name

At my second sitting with Mrs Leonard, on the 1st of June, 1924, I spent most of the time in asking questions, and there were only two messages of a strictly evidential nature

Feda said that one of my wife's oldest friends was present with her She described this lady, a cousin and life-long friend of my wife's, so that I recognized her I will call her Mrs John I asked Feda if the lady could give me a message

for her son, as he was very anxious to hear news of her Feda, in reply, said that Jonathan was not only worried about his mother but was worried about something else and was in a position from which he would have to be released, as his surroundings hindered his development

I knew nothing about that, but when I spoke of it to Jonathan he said it was true

Feda said there was someone with my wife "Lucille—no, it is not Lucille, it is a young man It is Lally, Lally—Lel" I asked if the name was Leslie, and she said it was, and that he was with someone called Fred, who was very dear to him someone who had passed over since Leslie

I did not know, until I reached home and was told, that Leslie's father was named Fred, nor that his brother habitually called Leslie, Lel

In neither of those two cases would telepathy explain Feda's knowledge She could not have read in my mind thoughts which were not there She could not have got from me facts of which I was ignorant

It is very easy to ask questions about apparent contradictions or inconsistencies found in psychic manifestations, but it is less easy to answer them We are not as familiar with the Astral Plane as with Trafalgar Square, and we should, as Mr Gow tells me, allow a margin for mistakes In Sir Oliver Lodge's book, "Raymond Revised," I came across the following caution by the author

"I explain in due time and place that we have not as yet the privilege of getting into touch with the complete personality of the departed, we see through a glass

darkly, not face to face But through a more or less turbid medium we do catch glimpses, we do become aware of a real surviving personality ”

When I was with Mrs Leonard on the 1st of June, Feda said “ Your lady speak of two anniversaries, one just past, one to come The one to come, she say is important It brought you and her together ” Then she made this remarkable addition “ *She take hold of your arm to show it brought you together* ”

That set me thinking Did Feda, then, read, from signs or actions and translate them into words ? It looked like it, and in “ Raymond ” I found two separate statements which seem to confirm the idea - On page 62 Feda is speaking of Raymond, and she says “ ‘ He has been to see you before, and he says that once he thought you knew he was there, and that two or three times he was not quite sure ’ ” “ Feda gets it mostly by impression , it is not always what he says, but what she gets, but Feda says, ‘ he says,’ because she gets it from him somehow ”

On page 69 Mr Peters is giving Sir Oliver Lodge a message from his son, and he makes the following statement

“ Now he wants me to tell you this that from his death, which is only one of thousands, that the work which he (I have to translate his ideas into words, I don’t get them verbatim)—the work which he volunteered to be able to succeed in—no, that’s not it The work which he enlisted for, that is what he says, only he was only a unit and seemingly lost—yet the very fact of his death will be the means of pushing it on Now I have got it By his passing away many hundreds will be benefited ”

If, as the above statements suggest, the control has to translate thoughts or actions into words, and must use his or her own words, and not those of the spirit communicator, it is not at all strange that mistakes occur. And we must not fall into the common error of supposing that a spirit or a spirit control is ubiquitous, or infallible. A human being does not become omniscient a few days after leaving the body.

There are inconsistencies, too, for what Feda and Mr Peters have just told us does not apply to all messages. Many of the messages coming from my wife through Feda were obviously given in words, and in my wife's words. For instance, when Feda said "Alas, alas! What is that?" And then added, "Oh, she says where she come from a lass is a girl," she was obviously not translating action or thought, but was repeating verbatim words spoken to her.

Let us next take an excerpt from the paper written by Sir Oliver Lodge in answer to M. Richet.

"Subjective metapsychics is still easier to associate with human survival. The controlling immaterial entity, the living personality, was known, while here, to be able to operate on the cells of its brain, so as not only to move muscles but thereby to convey ideas intelligibly to other similar personalities who were acquainted with the conventional signs or language. And it is a question of evidence whether this power of operation on brains can be extended to other brains, so that a personality which has lost the use of its own instrument may be able, with difficulty and by permission, to work similarly on the brain of some hospitable person who partially vacates his instrument in trance, or who allows part of it to be used."

for moving either his hand in writing or his organs of speech

" If so, the ideas thus conveyed may mainly belong and be largely appropriate, not to the host or 'medium,' but to the actuating personality or 'control.' Though admittedly the habit and cultivation of the medium's brain may to some extent hamper free and unsophisticated and fully intelligent control, and may necessitate a judicious selection of topics or of language, such as the instrument may be able to transmit without undue and telergic effort "

A message, then, must be conveyed by the communicating spirit to the control, who must pass it on to the sitter by the agency of the medium's brain. And the sceptic demands that messages sent in that indirect manner shall be absolutely clear and absolutely correct.

There are peculiarities in spirit-communion for which no human explanation is forthcoming. Names, now! The controls seem to find difficulty in the handling of surnames. They avoid them. They speak of discarnate spirits, and of those who have not yet cast off this muddy vesture of decay, by their Christian names.

Feda was telling me of a young man killed on the Somme. She got his Christian name after several attempts, and then told me " He is with someone who passed over after him, someone called Fred, who is very dear to him " Fred? I wondered who Fred might be. Well, it turns out to be his father. But on this side we should never dream of saying of a father and son, " Young Philip lives with one who is very fond of him Bill " I suppose that on the other side age is a

cipher and Leslie and his father, "Fred," are like two brothers

But why do controls fight shy of surnames? Feda does not mention my wife's name, she speaks of her as "your lady," and calls me "Mister Bob." And she told me that a cousin of my wife's, who passed over many years ago, has a dear friend whose initial is J. And this J is her mother, I opine, whose name was Jane. Feda gave me an accurate and graphic description of my mother, who died in 1890, but did not mention her name. She said that with her was a young man who passed over many years ago in a far country of whom she was very fond. But when, guessing it to be my nephew, I asked for his name, she could not give it. She said she "could not sense his name."

To help me in the matter, Sir Oliver Lodge has kindly sent me an article of his on "The Brain and Speech," which appeared in the Journal of the Society of Psychical Research for May last.

The article is quite clear and logical, but is difficult to compress. Sir Oliver says

"This kind of aphasia is often attributed to a mental confusion of the communicator under unusual conditions, and occasionally there may be that confusion. But usually I think the difficulty is not due to mental confusion at all, but to a lack of adequate control of the mechanism, so that there is a block at some junction on the way to the speech centres, an obstruction which has to be got round by some indirect path."

"Many people have thought that this difficulty about names and the hedging when anything definite has to be uttered, as, for instance, in reply to a sudden question, is a sign not of mental confusion but of some kind of fishing

and fraud I believe that in most cases that is a great mistake, and that we should accept the fact that there is a difficulty, and try to realize wherein the difficulty consists

"And really it is very much what one ought to expect, on the view that a full and competent intelligence is trying to use a borrowed brain-mechanism not completely under control, and finding obstruction along what would seem to be quite simple and customary channels"

The process seems to be thus The control receives a message from the spirit who wishes to communicate with the sitter That message must be sent by the control through the brain and speech of the medium But the control has not, perhaps, full power over the medium's brain He is looking for words in the medium's brain as one might look for matches and candles in a strange house

Now names are always more difficult to remember than ideas I have a good memory, but I commonly boggle over the names of people and places What do I do? I say, "That man who tells the dog stories," or "That place we landed at in Morocco" In the same way Feda instead of saying, "That little photograph has gone to Africa," says that "it is a long way off" And during my latest sitting she said "There is a letter about being posted for you in that place where George comes from" And the letter, by the way, was posted, and has duly reached me

Miss Walbrook, in her introduction to "The Case of Lester Coltman," alludes to this queer trouble over names

"Names are always a difficulty in such communica-

tions, which has been explained by the fact that a name is a purely artificial thing and differs entirely from our idea. We are conscious ourselves of how names evade us in life, especially as we grow older, though we may retain the clearest recollection of the individual."

There is a pretty standard tea-rose in my garden. It is named Anna Olivier. Nine times out of ten when I am asked the name, I find it has evaded me. But I never forget the style and colour of its roses, the shape of its symmetrical head, or the spot in the garden where it stands. I could always say at once "That pretty cream and pink tea-rose at the south end of the square bed is very graceful and decorative, and is always full of bloom." But I could not as promptly remember the words, Anna Olivier.

Now, if I have such trouble over a name when using my own brain, what would a control do with me if I were a medium? It is easy, even in a strange house, to find the dining-table, or the kitchen range or the piano, but it is more difficult to find the matches or the sugar or the piano score of "The Gondoliers."

Lord Beaconsfield could not remember the name Cyprus, and spoke of it in the House as "that island," and Emerson called to see a friend, and being asked by the servant for his own name could not remember it.

We are a long way from the solution of the mysteries of the mind. In the issue of "Light" for 27th September, 1924, in an article on Vibrations by Mr Arthur Butcher, I came across an idea which is new to me. The writer says

MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH III

"Our five senses may be regarded as a set of delicate instruments, each with an exquisite sensibility for certain rates of vibration, whereby we are enabled to apprehend *something* of the world external to ourselves. That they are limited in their range can be readily shown, but it by no means follows that these limitations exhaust the possibilities of our being. We frequently find it necessary to correct or amend the evidences of our senses, and the fact of our doing so is proof that we possess a faculty or power transcending that of sensation. Take any animal with similar senses to those of man, but more highly developed. Could such an animal solve a problem in arithmetic *although endowed with greater sensibility?* Calculation, as we all know, is not a matter of the senses. Clearly, then, it must be the work of a faculty superior to them, because able to successfully deal with matters beyond their range."

I am really surprised that I have not only never thought of that, but have never before met with it in my reading. Yet it is obviously true. We do not think by means of our five senses. A man might lose his sight, his hearing, his taste, his smell, and his sense of touch and still be able to think acutely and profoundly.

Do we think with the brain? Just as much as we play with a piano or write with a typing machine. But the piano does not make the tune nor does the typing machine compose the article or letter. I don't believe the brain originates anything. The brain only writes, speaks or hears, from dictation. We think from the mind and the mind is independent of the senses, as Mr. Butcher tells us.

The senses have no part in the origination of a thought. What is a thought? What is thought

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made of? Where does it come from? It is an immaterial thing thought Yet it can make wars and revolutions, romances and tragedies and comedies, and religions and sciences and art and music and poetry, and hospitals and prisons and flower gardens and poison gas

I like the spiritualist philosophy, and for me the spiritualist conception of marriage has a warm appeal. Let us glance at this which to many of us is a new and strange theory.

John Galsworthy, in an essay on "The Position of Women," some years ago, wrote as follows:

The destinies of mankind are seen to be guided, very slowly, by something more coherent than political opportunity, shaped steadily in a given direction toward the completion of that temple of Justice. There is no other way of explaining the growth of man from the cave-dweller to his present case. And this slow spiritual shaping towards Equity proceeds in spite of the workings of the twin bodily agents force and expedient. Social and political growth is, in fact, a process of evolution controlled and directed, spiritualized by the supreme principle of Equity.'

In fact, "There's a Divinity which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." A Divinity. A spiritual force.

Now, the spiritualist's idea of the workings of that spiritual force differs from the idea held and taught by the orthodox religions, and the effects of that difference of idea upon the problem of matrimony are surprising. They are surprising because although the orthodox religions affect to look down upon spiritualism as on a lower moral plane, the spiritualist theory of marriage is more

exalted and more pure than that of any Christian sect

In the Catholic Church, marriage is for life. Should a married couple separate they must not marry again. In the Protestant Churches marriage is for life, but divorce is permitted in cases of unfaithfulness, and the divorced may marry again. In all Christian Churches monogamy is the law. A man may only have one wife so long as his wife is alive and not divorced.

But in all Christian Churches marriage is dissolved by death. After the death of one of a married couple the survivor may re-marry. Christian marriage ends at the grave. What is the orthodox belief as to relationship after death, I am not sure. The position seems vague and formless. I suppose most Christians would say, "In heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage," and let it go at that. But a spiritualist would not agree. The spiritualist believes that men are men and women are women in the other world, and that as one is incomplete without the other, there will be marriages there, but they will be perfect and spiritual marriages, such are not possible in this life.

Marriage, real marriage, the perfected "mating," according to the spiritualist faith, instead of ending at death, is only attainable after death. The ideal marriage is not for life, it is for eternity. That does not mean that a couple married in this life would be compelled or expected to remain man and wife for ever. Men and women in the next world, as I read it, will not be bound together

under penalties, they will be free to choose, and they will find their natural mates, as men here find their natural friends, and a pair once perfectly mated will no more wish to part than two old friends would wish to part in this life

Let us realize that in the spiritualist's future life there will be no struggle for existence, no sensual passions, no children to keep and educate, and women and men will be in all respects as equal there as two men are here. A married couple in the next world, according to spiritualist belief, will be a completed unit. They will have given themselves each to the other. They will never part, because their happiness will be complete. They will work together like the two wings of a bird. They will be as inseparable as the bass and treble wedded in a fugue. Marriage there will be a mating of affinities.

And why not a like state of blessedness here and now? Why not ideal marriages on earth? Assuredly the Christian Churches enjoin upon all married couples the lesson that they should live a life of love and righteousness. But that is a counsel of perfection built upon a hope so slender that the final words of the marriage service might almost be "And the Lord have mercy on your souls."

No, I am not cynical. The priest blesses the bride and groom and exhorts them to be loving and good, and, I suppose, he hardly ever realizes that in the case of more than half the couples he is asking for the accomplishment of the impossible. What draws most couples together? Sex-mag-

netism Sex-magnetism is wrongly called love But it is not love It may or may not develop into love, but it is not love It is a subconscious call and pull not directed or controlled by the reason It is a form of unconscious hypnotism, by means of which Nature achieves her ends

A marriage of passion may fail because one of the pair is unworthy, because neither is suitable for the other, because both are frivolous or selfish, or because one or both may be ignorant of the essentials of wedded happiness A marriage of passion may succeed because, by the grace of God, and not by reason of their own judgment, the pair are natural affinities A bridal couple may be so happily endowed and so perfectly matched that they are one from the word yes, and can never be widowed by death But such blessed luck is rare The rest of us have to live and learn, or to repent at leisure

Many married couples are not mated, and never can be mated They are bound together by a clerical or legal fiction Many divorces are granted for a more venial form of unfaithfulness than that which mars the daily lives of a host of respectable husbands and wives

Oh, quite respectable! There is a striking example in a story of Mr Locke's, "The Scourge" Sir Hildebrand Oates was a perfect pattern of dignified propriety "He married young His wife brought him a fortune, for which he was sole trustee, a couple of children, and a submissive obedience unparalleled in the most correct Moslem households A weak, timid, sentimental soul,

she was daunted from the first few frosty days of honeymoon by the inflexible personality of her husband "

Yes He formed her opinions, regulated her conduct, ordered her life And she actually resented it—though he was too self-satisfied to see it until he had to, which was after her death, and when her will was read She left all her money and property to her children, and she "did in" her masterful husband in these sweet words "I will and bequeath to my husband, Sir Hildebrand Oates, Knight, the sum of fifteen shillings to buy himself a scourge to do penance for the arrogance, uncharitableness and cruelty with which he has treated myself and my children for the last thirty years "

There ! Man of unblemished character, perfect gentleman Marriage of strict propriety ! Could that poor woman have hoped for a divorce ? What ! A model husband He was not unfaithful in the eyes of the law Yet he made his wife miserable for thirty years He never was a husband to her at all Theirs was a thoroughly immoral marriage and, as I say, men have been divorced for a misconduct, less unpardonable than that of which he was guilty day after day and year after year

One cannot imagine a reunion of such a couple in the other world The law can tie a woman to a brute or a man to a slut for life, but death will set the prisoner free Only love can hold women and men together on that happier shore Love ! But what is love ? If sex-magnetism is not love,

what is this elusive quality? I think real love, the love that is stronger than death, is born of knowledge—that is to say, of the mutual appreciation which comes of knowledge. I think also that love is a plant of slow growth. In both these characteristics it resembles friendship.

What almost invariably happens in a marriage of passion is that when the young people wake up out of their hypnotic dream they have to begin again a new and more risky and difficult courtship. They have to learn each other's characters. It is with the bride as with the wife in Ibsen's "Doll's House"—she finds herself living with a strange man. And the strange man finds himself bound for life to a woman he had never really seen before the honeymoon. The pair of them are awake, and they find their conscious selves looking at each other with wonder, if not with fear.

And, to make their ignorance more dangerous and helpless, they are beset with a host of unforeseen difficulties and petty trials and disquieting misunderstandings. Perhaps there are disparities of temperament, or maddening vices, or ineradicable coarsenesses of soul which render their task hopeless. Perhaps, as the sex-magnetism fades out, indifference, aversion or sheer disgust may take its place.

Perhaps, after many clashes and heartburnings and tears, each may begin to perceive in the other some promise of a possible comradeship based on mutual need and mutual trust, in which case the real love, that tenderer and stronger and more intimate friendship, will begin to strike root and

grow It will grow slowly, for it is to last for all time It may be that the price of sweetness is bitter, but, when one is buying heaven! —

Earthly marriage is just a courtship, which may end in success or failure The real marriages, the matings, are made in heaven At least, that is what the spiritualists believe To me it seems a very beautiful and hopeful faith and one deep rooted in justice and reason

Of course, as I have already indicated, there are some fortunate couples who by sheer good luck meet their affinities and just run together and coalesce like two nodules of quicksilver These are truly married, not for life, but for all time Death can part them for awhile, but Death must reunite them So the spiritualists say

And if we accept the spiritualist's view the answers to some otherwise difficult questions are easy When a widow dies will she rejoin her husband? Yes, if that is their will When a man has twice married, which of the women will be his mate in the Great Beyond? Perhaps one, perhaps the other, perhaps neither Will a bachelor find a mate over there? Yes, if he is worthy and if his natural mate finds him

And on what grounds do the spiritualists build up this radiant faith? Simply on the evidence of spirit messages Spirits communicate as men and women They have retained their sex Spirit wives send messages of love to their living husbands, husbands send messages of love to their living wives Messages from the spirits tell of the reunion of wives and husbands in the other

world No news comes of angels or of devils, we only hear of more or less perfect or imperfect women and men But we must remember that those spirits all have left their flesh behind, and with it, one hopes, the lusts of the flesh and the pains and burdens flesh is heir to They tell us, too, these spirit messages, that the sins of the flesh are regarded less unmercifully by spiritual eyes It is the sins of the soul that leave the deeper scars, and demand the longer and more arduous atonement

Whether the spiritualists are or are not mistaken I think their philosophy is sweet and sound Nature, that is to say the sex-magnetism, drives men and women into unsuitable or unhappy unions in this world, and human wisdom has been unable to devise a safeguard It would seem but just, therefore, that in a future life poor human beings should be more suitably and congenially mated So I like to think that real marriages are made in heaven, where the broken music of life is mended and the wounds of the heart and shames of the soul are healed But it is a curious philosophy, is it not? and casts some queer revealing lights upon the haphazard marriages we make here and now

There exists to-day a considerable amount of candid and temperate comment on spiritualism, outside the spiritualist ranks I was pleased to find the following passage in Mr J St Loe Strachey's book "The River of Life"

"Our want is new senses, not new facts Where we fail is in our powers of perception We only *know* what

we feel, see and hear, and only see, feel and hear those things which are able to impress our imperfect senses. The rest—and who dare put limits thereto?—we rightly call invisible, inaudible, intangible, but, remember, *not* non-existent. Perhaps some day these unknowables may become knowable, but only by the development of a new sense or senses. Then we shall know more though still not all. Beyond the newest sense a newer sense will always be required."

Mr Strachey goes on to say that it must be impossible for spirits to tell us of certain aspects of their world and life, because there are no words or terms in which the entirely strange ideas could be conveyed to our understanding.

In these fugitive pages I have dealt only with one medium, a trance medium. There are others, and one of the most important kinds is the clairvoyant medium. Such a medium will go on to a platform, in a strange town, and describe and name spirits he sees in the room. He will describe them as standing by some friend or relative in the audience. Of these descriptions it generally happens that eight or nine out of ten are recognized. There are some striking examples in Mr J Arthur Hill's book "Psychic Investigations". And my daughter and a friend of ours have had very interesting experiences. Mrs Brittain is a recognized first-class clairvoyant.

But a good deal depends upon the sitter.

He needs to be calm and patient, and to have a friendly mind. It is against the chances of success for the sitter to "go about to recover the mind" of the medium, "as though he would drive him into a snare." We do not try to mislead a doctor

when he is making a diagnosis. It is advisable to watch closely and listen keenly, but it is detrimental to regard the medium as fraudulent from the very beginning of a séance.

My own experiences, to which I have confined myself, are in no way sensational, and inquirers will only realize their full significance when they study the more important evidence given in other psychic books.

As I have been asked to name some of the books which have led me into my quest, I will print the answer here, as it will serve as a guide to those who are strangers to psychic literature, and would like a better acquaintance with it —

I think I began to take notice after reading two scientific books. Those were "Introduction to Science," Prof J A Thomson (Williams & Norgate, 2s 6d), and "The Origin and Nature of Life," Prof B Moore (same publisher and price). Those two small books are very instructive and intensely interesting.

Next, I think, came the first volume of Flammarion's "Death and its Mystery" (Fisher Unwin). I don't remember the price. The three volumes are full of marvels, and the professor is very convincing. I rather think it was reading Flammarion for review that set me on the trail. And Mr J Arthur Hill, of Bradford, sent me three of his books, the first of which, "Psychical Investigations" (Cassell), awakened my interest and set me thinking.

"Human Personality" (2 vols), F W H Myers (Longmans), came next. This is a monumental

work by a man of great intellect and scholarship Myers deals fully and subtly with "The Fellow in the Cellarage" This work is both illuminating and suggestive When I had read it I began to look for other books, and I soon found another of great value This was Prof Hudson's "The Divine Pedigree of Man" (A C McClurg) I think the price was eight shillings A most absorbing book a kind of descent of the soul, or evolution of the spirit Those who set out with a light heart to shut up those foolish spiritualists will find Prof Hudson a stiff proposition Every inquirer should read his book

I am afraid I cannot give the rest of the works in the order in which I read them "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," by Professor Henry Drummond (Hodder & Stoughton), came early, as did Sir Wm Barrett's "On the Threshold of the Unseen" (Kegan, Paul) Then there were two more books by Mr J Arthur Hill, "Religion and Modern Psychology" (Rider) and "Spiritualism, its History, Phenomena, and Doctrine" (Cassell)

I think about that time I read Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Vital Message" (Hodder & Stoughton) and "Man's Survival After Death," by the Rev C L Tweedale (Grant Richards) The last-named book is the most astounding I have read, unless Florence Marryatt's "There is No Death" I should describe both as "a combination of staggerers" I cannot describe or classify Mr Tweedale's book It is as full of marvels as of enthusiasm and logic

While engaged in those readings, I received at

intervals the following books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge

Sir Arthur "Wanderings of a Spiritualist" (Doran), "Our American Adventure" and "Our Second American Adventure" (both Hodder & Stoughton), and "The Case for Spirit Photography" (Hutchinson) I have just got "Memories and Adventures," Sir A Conan Doyle (Hodder & Stoughton, 2os net)

Sir Oliver Lodge "The Ether of Space" (Harpers, 2s 6d net) Too technical for me
"The Making of Man" (Hodder & Stoughton),
"Raymond Revised" (Methuen, 6s net)

Others by various authors are "The Truth About Spiritualism," by Rita (Werner Laurie), "Some New Evidence for Survival," the Rev Chas Drayton Thomas (Collins), "Facts and the Future Life," Rev G Vale Owen (Hutchinson), "Psychic Philosophy," Stanley De Brath, "The Case of Lester Coltman," Lilian Walbrook (Hutchinson), "The Blue Island," Estelle Stead, "Claude's Book" and "Claude's Second Book," by Kelway Bamber (Methuen), "Spiritualism Its Ideas and Ideals," David Gow (Jno M Watkins), and "Towards the Stars," by H Dennis Bradley (Werner Laurie), which I reviewed in the "Clarion" That list should keep an inquirer busy for some days I am sorry I cannot give the prices of all the books named, but many of them are presentation or review copies, and I have omitted to mark the prices on most of them

"Survival" (published by Putnams, 7s 6d net) is an excellent book for the uninitiated

I should add that I have had a good deal of correspondence with experienced psychic explorers, and that the Editor of "Light" has kindly sent me his paper, which has been very helpful. I must also acknowledge with gratitude the valuable advice and instruction received from Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr Hewat McKenzie, of the British Psychical College, and Mr David Gow, Editor of "Light". The letters of my friend T A R Purchas, of Johannesburg, have been as valuable as a book. On the whole, I think I may claim that I have not jumped to conclusions, but have given serious study and a good deal of time to the investigation. It is four years since I first began to ask myself questions I am still seeking for some of the answers.

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